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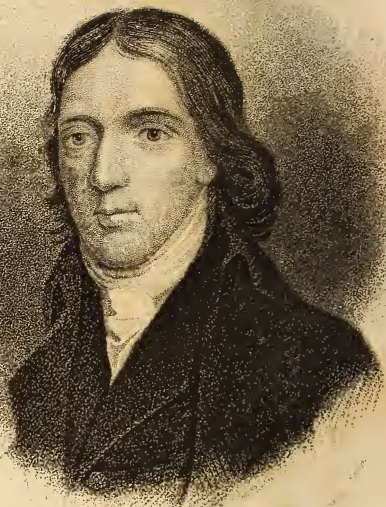
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REV. SAMUEL PEARCE A.M.

Published at the American School for the Deaf, Poughkeepsie.

MEMOIRS

OF THE LATE

REV. SAMUEL PEARCE, A. M.

WITH

EXTRACTS FROM SOME OF HIS MOST INTERESTING
LETTERS.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A BRIEF MEMOIR OF MRS. PEARCE.

COMPILED BY

ANDREW FULLER, D. D.



AMERICAN SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION.

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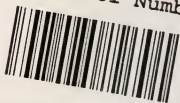
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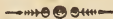
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INTRODUCTION.



m. m. w. 27 Mar. 1805.
IT was observed by this excellent man, during his last affliction, that he never till then gained any personal instruction from our Lord's telling Peter by *what death* he should glorify God. To die by a consumption, had used to be an object of dread to him : but, "Oh my Lord, (said he,) if by *this death* I can most GLORIFY THEE, I prefer it to all others." The lingering death of the cross, by which our Saviour himself expired, afforded him an opportunity of uttering some of the most affecting sentences which are left on sacred record : and to the lingering death of this his honoured servant, we are indebted for a considerable part of the materials which appear in these Memoirs. Had he been taken away suddenly, there had been no opportunity for him to have expressed his sentiments and feelings in the manner he has now done in letters to his friends. While in health, his hands were full of labour, and consequently his letters were written mostly upon the spur of occasion ; and related principally to business, or to things which would be less interesting to Christians in general. It is true, even in them it was his manner to drop a few sentiments, towards the close, of an experimental kind ; and many

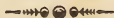
of these hints will be interspersed in this brief account of him. But it was during his affliction, when, being laid aside nearly a year, and obliged to desist from all public concerns, that he gave scope to the feelings of his heart. Here, standing as on an eminence, he reviewed his life, re-examined the ground of his hope, and anticipated the crown which awaited him, with a joy truly *unspeakable and full of glory*.

Like Elijah, he has left the *chariot of Israel*, and ascended as in a *chariot of fire*; but not without having first communicated of his eminently Christian spirit. Oh that a double portion of it may rest upon us!

MEMOIRS

OF THE LATE

REV. SAMUEL PEARCE, A. M.



CHAPTER I.

His Parentage, Conversion, Call to the Ministry, and Settlement at Birmingham.

MR. SAMUEL PEARCE was born at Plymouth, in England, on 20th July, 1766. His father, who survived him, was a respectable silversmith, and was many years a deacon of the Baptist church in that place.

When a child, he lived with his grandfather, who was very fond of him, and endeavoured to impress his mind with the principles of religion. At about eight or nine years of age, he came home to his father with a view of learning his business. As he advanced in life, his evil propensities, as he has said, began to ripen; and forming connections with several vicious school-fellows, he became more and more corrupted. So greatly was his heart, at this time, set in him to do evil, that had it not been for the restraining goodness of

God, which somehow, he knew not how, preserved him in most instances from carrying his wicked inclinations into practice, he supposed he should have been utterly ruined.

At times he was under strong convictions, which rendered him miserable; but at other times they subsided; and then he would return with eagerness to his sinful pursuits. When about fifteen years old he was sent by his father to inquire after the welfare of a person in the neighbourhood, in dying circumstances, who, though before his departure he was in a happy state of mind, yet at that time was sinking into deep despair. While in the room of the dying man, he heard him cry out with inexpressible agony of spirit, "I am damned for ever!" These awful words pierced his soul; and he felt a resolution at the time to serve the Lord: but the impression soon wore off, and he again returned to folly.

When about sixteen years of age, it pleased God effectually to turn him to himself. A sermon delivered by Mr. Birt, who was then co-pastor with Mr. Gibbs, of the Baptist church at Plymouth, was the first means of impressing his heart with a sense of his lost condition, and of directing him to the gospel remedy. The change in him appears to have been sudden, but effectual; and the recollection of his former vicious propensities, though a source of bitterness, yet furnished a strong

evidence of its being the work of God. "I believe," he says, "few conversions were more joyful. The change produced in my views, feelings, and conduct, was so evident to myself, that I could no more doubt of its being from God, than of my existence. I had the witness in myself, and was filled with peace and joy unspeakable."

His feelings being naturally strong, and receiving a new direction, he entered into religion with all his heart; but not having known the devices of Satan, his soul was entangled by its own ardour, and he was thrown into great perplexity. Having read Doddridge's *Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*, he determined formally to dedicate himself to the Lord, in a manner recommended in the seventeenth chapter of that work. The form of a covenant, as there drawn up, he also adopted as his own; and that he might bind himself in the most solemn and affecting manner, *signed it with his blood*. But afterwards failing in his engagements, he was plunged into dreadful perplexity, and almost into despair. On a review of his covenant, he seems to have accused himself of a pharisaical reliance upon the strength of his own resolutions; and therefore taking the paper to the top of his father's house, he tore it into small pieces, and threw it from him to be scattered by the wind. He did not however consider his obligation to be

the Lord's, as hereby destroyed; but feeling more suspicion of himself, he depended upon *the blood of the cross*.

After this he was baptized, and became a member of the Baptist church at Plymouth, the ministers and members of which, in a few years, perceived in him talents for the ministry. Being solicited by both his pastors, he exercised as a probationer; and receiving a unanimous call from the church, entered on the work of the ministry in November, 1786. Soon after this he went to the academy at Bristol, then under the superintendence of Dr. Caleb Evans.

Mr. Birt, now pastor of the Baptist church in the square, Plymouth Dock, in a letter to the Compiler of these Memoirs, thus speaks of him:—"Though he was, so far as I know, the very first fruits of my ministry, on my coming hither, and though our friendship and affection for each other were great and constant, yet previous to his going to Bristol, I had but few opportunities of conversing with him, or of making particular observations on him. All who best knew him, however, will remember, and must tenderly speak of his loving deportment; and those who attended the conferences with him soon received the most impressive intimation of his future eminence as a minister of our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Very few," adds Mr. Birt, "have enter

ed upon, and gone through their religious profession with more exalted piety, or warmer zeal, than Samuel Pearce; and as few have exceeded him in the possession and display of that *charity* which ‘suffereth long, and is kind, that envieth not, that vaunteth not itself, and is not puffed up, that doth not behave itself unseemly, that seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, that beareth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things.’ But why should I say this to you? You knew him yourself.”

While at the academy he was much distinguished by the amiableness of his spirit and behaviour. It is sometimes observable that where the talents of a young man are admired by his friends, and his early efforts flattered by crowded auditories, effects have been produced which have proved fatal to his future respectability and usefulness. But this was not the case with Mr. Pearce. Amidst the tide of popularity, which even at that early period attended his ministerial exercises, his tutors have more than once remarked that he never appeared to them to be in the least elated, or to have neglected his proper studies; but was uniformly the serious, industrious, docile, modest, and unassuming young man.

Towards the latter end of 1789, he came to the church in Cannon-street, Birmingham, to which he was recommended by Mr. Hall, now

of Cambridge, at that time one of his tutors. After preaching to them awhile on probation, he was chosen to be their pastor. His ordination was in August, 1790. In the year 1791, he married Miss Sarah Hopkins, daughter of Mr. Joshua Hopkins of Alcester: a connection which appears to have been all along a source of great enjoyment to him.

The soul of Mr. Pearce was formed for friendship. It was natural therefore to suppose, that while engaging in the pursuit of his studies at the academy, he would contract religious intimacies with some of his brethren; and it is worthy of notice, that the grand cement of his friendship was *kindred piety*. In the two following letters, addressed to his friend, Mr. Steadman, the reader will perceive the justness of this remark, as well as the encouraging prospects which soon attended his labours at Birmingham:—

“My very dear Brother,

May 9, 1792.

“You live so remote that I can hear nothing of your prosperity at Broughton. I hope you are settled with a comfortable people, and that you enjoy much of your Master’s presence, both in the study and the pulpit. For my part, I have nothing to lament but an insensible, ungrateful heart, and that is sufficient cause for lamentation. This, only this, bows me down; and under this pressure I am ready to

adopt the words I preached from last evening:—*Oh that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest!*

As a people, we are generally united. Our number of members is about two hundred and ninety-five, between forty and fifty of whom have joined us since I saw you, and most of them I have the happiness of considering as my children in the faith. There is still a crying out amongst us after salvation; and still, through much grace, it is my happiness to point them to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world.

I hope still that I am willing to spend and be spent, so that I may win souls to Christ, and finish my course with joy; but I want more heart religion: I want a more habitual sense of the divine presence; I want to walk with God as Enoch walked. There is nothing that grieves me so much, or brings so much darkness on my soul, as my little spirituality, and frequent wanderings in secret prayer. I cannot neglect the duty, but it is seldom that I enjoy it.

‘Ye that love the Lord indeed,
Tell me, is it so with you?’

When I come to the house of God, I pray and preach with freedom. Then I think the presence of the people seems to weigh more with me than the presence of God, and deem my-

self a hypocrite, almost ready to leave my pulpit, for some more pious preacher. But the Lord does own the word; and again I say, if I go to hell myself, I will do what I can to keep others from going thither: and so in the strength of the Lord I will.

An observation once made to me helps to support me above water:—"If you did not plough in your closet, you would not reap in the pulpit." And again I think the Lord *dwelleth in Zion*, and loveth it *more* than the dwellings of Jacob. S. P."

There are few, if any, thinking men, but who at some seasons have had their minds perplexed with regard to religious principles, even those which are of the greatest importance. In the end, however, where the heart is right, they commonly issue in a more decided attachment to the truth. Thus it was with Mr. Pearce. After complaining of some perplexity on doctrinal points, he thus writes to his friend Steadman:—

"I was violently seized with a disorder very prevalent here, and which carried off many, supposed to be an inflammation in the bowels. One Sabbath evening I felt such alarming symptoms that I did not expect to see the Monday morning. In these circumstances I realized the feelings of a dying man. My

mind had been so accustomed to reflect on virtue and moral goodness, that the first thing I attempted, was a survey of my own conduct; my diligence and faithfulness in the ministry, my unspotted life, &c. &c. But ah! vain props these for dying men to rest on! Such heart sins, such corruptions and evil propensities recurred to my mind, that if ever I knew the moment when I felt my own righteousness to be like loathsome and filthy rags, it was then. And where should I, where could I, where did I flee, but to Him whose glory and grace I had been of late degrading, at least in my thoughts? Yes, there I saw peace for guilty consciences was to be *alone* obtained through an almighty Saviour. And O! wonderful to tell, I again came to him; nor was I sent away without the blessing. I found him full of all compassion, ready to receive the most ungrateful of men.

‘O! to grace how great a debtor
Daily I’m constrained to be.’

Thus, my dear brother, was the snare broken, and thus I escaped.

‘A debtor to mercy alone,
Of covenant mercy I sing.’

Join with me in praising Him, who remembered me in my low estate, because his mercy endureth for ever. Yet this is among the *all things*. I have found it has made me more

spiritual in preaching. I have prized the gospel more than ever, and hope it will be the means of guarding me against future temptations.—Your brother, with ardent affection, in the dear Lord Jesus. S. P.”

From his first coming to Birmingham, his meekness and patience were put to the trial by a pernicious error, which infected many individuals, both in and out of his congregation. It is well known with what affection it was his practice to beseech sinners to be reconciled to God, and to exhort Christians to the exercise of practical godliness: but these were things which they could not endure. Soothing doctrine was all they desired. Therefore it was, that his ministry was traduced by them, and treated with neglect and contempt. But, like his divine Master, he bore the contradiction of sinners against himself, and this while he had the strongest satisfaction that in those very things to which they objected, he was pleasing God. And though he plainly perceived the pernicious influence of their principles upon their own minds, as well as the minds of others, yet he treated them with great gentleness and long forbearance.

Among his numerous religious friendships, he seems to have formed one for the special purpose of *spiritual improvement*. This was with Mr. Summers of London, who often ac-

accompanied him in his journeys; to whom, therefore, it might be expected he would open his heart without reserve. Here, it is true, we sometimes see him, like his brethren, groaning under darkness, want of spirituality, and the remains of indwelling sin; but frequently rising above all, as into his native element, and pouring forth his ardent soul in expressions of joy and praise. On Aug. 19, 1793, he writes thus:—

“My dear Brother,

“When I take my pen to pursue my correspondence with *you*, I have no concern but to communicate something which may answer the same end we propose in our annual journeys: viz. lending some assistance in the important object of *getting, and keeping near to God*. This I am persuaded is the mark at which we should be continually aiming, nor rest satisfied until we attain that to which we aspire. I am really ashamed of myself, when on the one hand, I review the time that has elapsed since I first assumed the Christian name, with the opportunities of improvement in godliness which have crowded on my moments since that period; and when on the other, I *feel* the little advance I have made! More *light*, to be sure, I have; but light without *heat* leaves the Christian half dissatisfied. Yesterday I preached on the duty of engaged-

ness in God's service, from Jer. xxx. 21, 'Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? saith the Lord.' (A text for which I am indebted to our last journey.) While urging the necessity of *heart* religion, including sincerity and ardour, I found myself much assisted by reflecting on the ardour which our dear Redeemer discovered in the cause of sinners. "Ah," I could not help saying, "if our Saviour had measured his intenseness in his engagements for us, by our fervency in fulfilling our engagements to him, we should have been now farther from hope than we are from perfection."

'Dear Lord, the ardour of *thy* love
Reproves my cold returns.'

"Two things are causes of daily astonishment to me—The readiness of Christ to come from heaven to earth for me; and my backwardness to rise from earth to heaven with him. But oh, how animating the prospect! A time approaches when we shall rise to sink no more: to 'be for ever with the Lord.' To be *with the Lord* for a week, for a day, for an hour; how sweetly must the moments pass! But to be *for ever* with the Lord,—*that* instamps salvation with perfection; that gives an energy to our hopes, and a dignity to our joy, so as to render it 'unspeakable and full of glory!' I have had a few realizing moments

since we parted, and the effect has been, I trust, a broken heart. O, my brother, it is desirable to have a broken heart, were it only for the sake of the pleasure it feels in being helped and healed by Jesus! Heart-affecting views of the cursed effects of sin are highly salutary to a Christian's growth in humility, confidence, and gratitude. At once how abasing and exalting is the comparison of our loathsome hearts with that of the lovely Saviour! In him, we see all that can charm an angel's heart; in *ourselves*, all that can gratify a devil's. And yet we may rest perfectly assured that these nests of iniquity shall ere long be transformed into the temples of God; and these sighs of sorrow be exchanged for songs of praise.

“Last Lord's day I spent the most profitable Sabbath to myself that I ever remember since I have been in the ministry; and to this hour I feel the sweet solemnities of that day delightfully protracted. Ah, my brother, were it not for past experience, I should say,

‘My heart presumes I cannot lose
The relish all my days.’

But now I rejoice with trembling; desiring to ‘hold fast what I have, that no man take my crown.’ Yet fearing that I shall find how

—‘Ere one fleeting hour is past,
The flatt'ring world employs

Some sensual bait to seize my taste,
And to pollute my joys.'

Yours, in our dear Saviour, S. P."

In April, 1794, dropping a few lines to the Compiler of these Memoirs, on Lord's day evening, he thus concludes:—"We have had a good day. I find, as a dear friend once said, *It is pleasant speaking for God when we walk with him.* Oh, for much of Enoch's spirit! The Head of the church grant it to my dear brother, and his affectionate friend,
S. P."

In another letter to Mr. Summers, dated June 24, 1794, he thus writes:—"Nor hath the word been without its effect; above fifty have been added to our church this year, most of whom I rejoice in, as the seals of my ministry in the Lord. Indeed I am surrounded with goodness; and scarce a day passes over my head, but I say, were it not for an *ungrateful heart* I should be the happiest man alive; and *that* excepted, I neither expect nor wish to be happier in this world. My wife, my children, and myself are uninterruptedly healthy; my friends kind; my soul at rest; my labours successful, &c. Who should be content and thankful, if I should not? Oh, my brother, help me to praise! S. P."

In a letter to Mrs. Pearce, from Plymouth, dated Sept. 2, 1794, the dark side of the cloud seems towards him:—"I have felt much barrenness, says he, as to spiritual things, since I have been here, compared with my usual frame at home; and it is a poor exchange to enjoy the creature at the expense of the Creator's presence: a few seasons of spirituality I have enjoyed; but my heart, my inconstant heart, is too prone to rove from its proper centre. Pray for me, my dear, my dearest friend! I do for you daily. Oh wrestle for me, that I may have more of Enoch's spirit! I am fully persuaded that a Christian is no longer really happy, and inwardly satisfied, than whilst he walks with God; and I would this moment rejoice to abandon every pleasure here for a closer walk with him. I cannot, amidst all the round of social pleasure, amidst the most inviting scenes of nature, *feel* that peace with God which passeth understanding. My thirst for preaching Christ, I fear, abates, and a detestable vanity for the reputation of a "good preacher" (as the world terms it) has already cost me many conflicts. Daily I feel convinced of the propriety of a remark which my friend Summers made on his journey to Wales, that 'It is easier for a Christian to walk habitually near to God, than to be irregular in our walk with him.' But I want resolution; I want a contempt for the world; I

want more heavenly-mindedness; I want more humility; I want much, very much of that, which God alone can bestow. Lord, help the weakest lamb in all thy flock!

“I preached this evening from Cant. ii. 3.: ‘I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.’ But how little love for my Saviour did I feel! with what little affection and zeal did I speak! I am, by some, praised; I am followed by many; I am respected by most of my acquaintances; but all this is nothing; yea, less than nothing, compared with possessing ‘this testimony, *that I please God.*’ Oh thou Friend of sinners, humble me by repentance, and melt me down with love!

“To-morrow morning I set off for Launceston. I write to night, lest my stay in Cornwall might make my delay appear tedious to the dear and deserving object of my most undissembled love. Oh, my Sarah, had I as much proof that I loved *Jesus Christ*, as I have of my love to *you*, I should prize it more than rubies! As often as you can find an hour for correspondence, think of your more than ever affectionate
S. P.”

CHAPTER II.

His laborious exertions in promoting Missions to the Heathen, and offering himself to become a Missionary.

MR. PEARCE was uniformly the spiritual and the active servant of Christ; but neither his spirituality nor his activity would have appeared in the manner they have, but for his engagements in the *introduction of the gospel among the heathen*.

It was not long after his settlement at Birmingham, that he became acquainted with MR. CAREY, in whom he found a soul nearly akin to his own. When the brethren in the counties of Northampton and Leicester formed themselves into a Missionary Society, at Kettering, in Oct. 1792, he was there, and entered into the business with all his heart. On his return to Birmingham, he communicated the subject to his congregation with so much effect, that to the small sum of 13*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.*, (£58.34) with which the subscription was begun, was added 70*l.*, (£311.11) which was collected and transmitted to the treasurer; and the leading members of the church formed themselves into an Assistant Society. Early in the following spring, when it was resolved that our brethren, Thomas and Carey,

should go on a mission to the Hindoos, and a considerable sum of money was wanted for the purpose, he laboured with increasing ardour in various parts of the kingdom; and when the object was accomplished, he rejoiced in all his labour, smiling in every company, and blessing God.

From the day of the departure of the Missionaries, no one was more importunate in prayer than Mr. Pearce; and on the news of their safe arrival, no one was more filled with joy and thankfulness.

Hitherto we had witnessed his zeal in promoting this important undertaking *at home*; but this did not satisfy him. In October, 1794, we were given to understand that he had for some time had it in serious contemplation to go himself, and to cast in his lot with his brethren in India. When his designs were first discovered, his friends and connexions were much concerned about it, and endeavoured to persuade him that he was already in a sphere of usefulness too important to be relinquished. But his answer was, that they were too interested in the affair to be competent judges, and nothing would satisfy him short of his making a formal offer of his services to the Committee: nor could he be happy for *them* to decide upon it, without their appointing a day of solemn prayer for the purpose, and, when assembled, hearing an

account of the principal exercises of his mind upon the subject, with the reasons which induced him to make the proposal, as well as the reasons alleged by his connexions against it.

About a month preceding the decision of this affair, he drew up a *narrative* of his experience respecting it; resolving at the same time to set apart one day in every week for secret fasting and prayer to God for direction; and to keep a *diary* of the exercises of his mind during the month.

When the Committee were met at Northampton according to his desire, he presented to them the narrative; and which was as follows:—

“ October 8, 1794. Having had some peculiar exercises of mind relative to my personally attempting to labour for the dear Redeemer amongst the *heathen*; and being at a loss to know what is the will of the Lord in this matter respecting me, I have thought that I might gain some satisfaction by adopting these two resolutions; First, That I will, as in the presence of God, faithfully endeavour to recollect the various workings of my mind on this subject, from the first period of my feeling any desire of this nature until now, and commit them to writing; together with what considerations do now, on the one hand, impel me to the work, and on the other, what

prevent me from immediately resolving to enter upon it. Secondly, That I will from this day keep a regular journal, with special relation to this matter.

“ This account and journal will, I hope, furnish me with much assistance, in forming a future opinion of the path of duty; as well as help any friends whom I may hereafter think proper to consult, to give me suitable advice in the business. Lord, help me!

“ It is very common for young converts to feel strong desires for the conversion of others. These desires immediately followed the evidences of my own religion: and I remember well they were particularly fixed upon the poor heathens. I believe the first week that I knew the grace of God in truth, I put up many fervent cries to Heaven in their behalf; and at the same time felt a strong desire to be employed in promoting their salvation. It was not long after, that the first settlers sailed for Botany Bay. I longed to go with them, although in company with the convicts, in hopes of making known the blessings of the great salvation in New Zealand. I actually had thought of making an effort to go out unknown to my friends; but, ignorant how to proceed, I abandoned my purpose. Nevertheless, I could not help talking about it; and at one time a report was circulated that I was really going; and a neighbouring minister

very seriously conversed with me upon the subject.

“While I was at the Bristol Academy, the desire remained; but not with that energy as at first, except on one or two occasions. Being sent by my tutor to preach two Sabbaths at Coldford, I felt particular sweetness in devoting the evenings of the week to going from house to house among the colliers, who dwell in the *Forest of Deane*, adjoining the town, conversing and praying with them, and preaching to them. In these exercises I found the most solid satisfaction that I have ever known in discharging the duties of my calling. In a poor hut, with a stone to stand upon, and a three-legged stool for my desk, surrounded with thirty or forty of the smutty neighbours, I have felt such an unction from above, that my whole auditory have been melted into tears, whilst directed to ‘the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world;’ and I, weeping among them, could scarcely speak, or they hear, for interrupting sighs and sobs. Many a time did I then think, Thus it was with the apostles of our Lord, when they went from house to house among the poor heathen. In work like this, I could live and die. Indeed, had I at that time been at liberty to settle, I should have preferred that situation to any in the kingdom with which I was then acquainted.

“But the Lord placed me in a situation very different. He brought me to Birmingham; and here, among the novelties, cares, and duties of my station, I do not remember any wish for foreign service, till after a residence of some months, I heard Dr. Coke preach at one of Mr. Wesley’s chapels, from Psalm lxviii. 31. ‘Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.’ Then it was, that in Mr. Horne’s phrase, ‘I felt a passion for missions.’ Then I felt an interest in the state of the heathen world far more deep and permanent than before, and seriously thought how I could best promote their obtaining the knowledge of the crucified Jesus.

“As no way at that time was open, I cannot say that I thought of taking a part of the good work among the heathen abroad; but resolved that I would render them all the assistance I could at home. My mind was employed during the residue of that week in meditating on Psalm lxvii. 3. ‘Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God;’—and the next Sabbath morning I spoke from those words, On the promised increase of the church of God. I had observed that our monthly meetings for prayer had been better attended than the other prayer-meetings, from the time that I first knew the people in Cannon-street: but I thought a more general attention to them was desirable. I therefore preached on the Sab-

bath-day evening preceding the next monthly prayer-meeting, from Matt. vi. 10. ‘Thy kingdom come;’ and urged with ardour and affection a universal union of the serious part of the congregation in this exercise. It rejoiced me to see three times as many the next night as usual; and for some time after that, I had nearly equal cause for joy.

“As to my own part, I continued to preach much upon the promises of God respecting the conversion of the heathen nations; and by so doing, and always communicating to my people every piece of information I could obtain respecting the present state of missions, they soon imbibed the same spirit: and from that time to this they have discovered so much concern for the more extensive spread of the gospel, that at our monthly prayer-meetings, both stated and occasional, I should be as much surprised at the case of the heathen being omitted in any prayer, as at an omission of the name and merits of Jesus.

“Indeed it has been a frequent mean of enkindling my languid devotion, in my private, domestic, and public engagements in prayer. When I have been barren in petitioning for myself, and other things, often have I been sweetly enlarged when I came to notice the situation of those who were perishing for lack of knowledge.

“Thus I went on praying, and preaching,

and conversing on the subject, till the time of brother Carey's ordination at Leicester, May 24, 1791. On the evening of that day, he read to the ministers a great part of his manuscript, since published; entitled, *An inquiry into the obligations of christians to use means for the conversion of the heathens*. This added fresh fuel to my zeal. But to pray and preach on the subject, was all I could then think of doing. But when I heard of a proposed meeting at Kettering, Oct. 2, 1792, for the express purpose of considering our duty in regard to the heathens, I could not resist my inclination for going; although at that time I was not much acquainted with the ministers of the Northamptonshire association. There I got my judgment informed, and my heart increasingly interested. I returned home resolved to lay myself out in the cause. The public steps I have taken are too well known to need repeating; but my mind became now inclined to go among the heathen myself. Yet a consideration of my connexions with the dear people of God in Birmingham, restrained my desires, and kept me from naming my wishes to any body, (as I remember) except to brother Carey. With him I was pretty free. We had an interesting conversation about it just before he left Europe. I shall never forget the *manner* of his saying, "Well, you will come after us."

My heart said, Amen! and my eagerness for the work increased; though I never talked freely about it, except to my wife, and we both then thought that my relation to the church in Cannon-street, and usefulness there, forbade any such an attempt. However, I have made it a constant matter of prayer, often begging of God, as I did when first I was disposed for the work of the ministry, either that he would take away the desire, or open a door for its fulfilment. And the result has uniformly been, that the more spiritual I have been in the frame of my mind, the more love I have felt for God, and the more communion I have enjoyed with him, so much the more disposed have I been to engage as a missionary among the heathen.

“Until the accounts came of our brethren’s entrance on the work in India, my connexions in Europe pretty nearly balanced my desire for going abroad; and though I felt quite devoted to the Lord’s will and work, yet I thought the scale rather preponderated on the side of my abiding in my present situation.

“But since our brethren’s letters have informed us that there are such prospects of usefulness in Hindostan,—that priests and people are ready to hear the word,—and that preachers are a thousand times more wanted, than people to preach to, my heart has been

more deeply affected than ever with their condition; and my desires for a participation of the toils and pleasures, crosses and comforts of which they are the subjects, are advanced to an anxiety which nothing can remove, and time seems to increase.

“It has pleased God also lately to teach me more than ever, that HIMSELF is the *fountain* of happiness; that likeness to him, friendship for him, and communion with him, form the basis of all true enjoyment; and that this can be attained as well in an eastern jungle, among Hindoos and Moors, as in the most polished parts of Europe. The very *disposition*, which, blessed be my dear Redeemer! he has given me, to be any thing, do any thing, or endure any thing, so that his name might be glorified,—I say, the *disposition* itself is heaven begun below. I do feel a daily panting after more devotedness to his service, and I can never think of my suffering Lord, without dissolving into love; love which constrains me to glorify him with my body and spirit, which are his.

“I do often represent to myself all the possible hardships of a mission, arising from my own heart, the nature of the country, domestic connexions, disappointment in my hopes, &c. &c. And then I set over against them all, these two thoughts,—*I am God’s servant, and God is my friend.* In this, I

anticipate happiness in the midst of suffering, light in darkness, and life in death. Yea, I do not count my life dear unto myself, so that I may win some poor heathens unto Christ; and I am willing to be offered as a sacrifice on the service of the faith of the gospel.

“Mr. Horne justly observes, ‘that, in order to justify a man’s undertaking the work of a missionary, he should be qualified for it, disposed heartily to enter upon it, and free from such ties as exclude an engagement.’—As to the first, others must judge for me; but they must not be men who have an interest in keeping me at home. I shall rejoice in opportunities of attaining to an acquaintance with the ideas of judicious and *impartial* men in this matter, and with them I must leave it. A willingness to embark in this cause I do possess; and I can hardly persuade myself that God has for ten years inclined my heart to this work without having any thing for me to do in it. But the third thing requires more consideration; and here alone I hesitate.”—Here he goes on to state all the objections from this quarter, with his answers to them, leaving it with his brethren to decide when they had heard the whole.

The Committee, after the most serious and mature deliberation, though they were fully satisfied as to brother Pearce’s qualifications, and greatly approved of his spirit, yet were

unanimously of opinion *that he ought not to go*; and that, not merely on account of his connexions at home, which might have been pleaded in the case of brother Carey, but on account of the mission itself, which required his assistance in the station which he already occupied.

In this opinion, brother Carey himself, with singular disinterestedness of mind, afterwards concurred; and wrote to brother Pearce to the same effect.*

On receiving the opinion of the Committee, he immediately wrote to Mrs. P. as follows:—

“ My dear Sarah, *Northampton*, Nov. 13, 1794.

“ I AM disappointed, but not dismayed. I ever wish to make my Saviour’s will my own. I am more satisfied than ever I expected I should be with a negative upon my earnest desires, because the business has been so conducted, that, I think, (if by any means such an issue could be insured) the mind of Christ has been obtained. My dear brethren here have treated the affair with as much seriousness and affection as I could possibly desire, and, I think, more than so insignificant a worm could expect. After we had spent the former part of this day in fasting and prayer, with conversation on the subject, till near two

* See Periodical Accounts, No. V. p. 374.

o'clock, brother Potts, King, and I retired. We prayed while the Committee consulted. The case seemed difficult, and I suppose they were nearly two hours in deciding. At last, *time* forced them to a point; and their answer I enclose for your satisfaction. Pray take care of it; it will serve for me to refer to when my mind may labour beneath a burden of guilt another day.

I am my dear Sarah's own S. P."

The decision of the Committee, though it rendered him much more reconciled to abide in his native country than he could have been without it; yet did not in the least abate his zeal for the object. As he could not promote it abroad, he seemed resolved to lay himself out more for it at home. In March, 1795, after a dangerous illness, he says in a letter to Mr. Fuller—"Through mercy I am almost in a state of convalescence. May my spared life be wholly devoted to the service of my dear Redeemer. I do not care where I am, whether in England or in India, so I am employed as he would have me; but surely we need pray hard that God would send some more help to Hindostan."

In January, 1796, when he was first informed by the Secretary, of a young man, (Mr. Fountain) being desirous of going, of the character that was given of him by our friend Mr.

Savage, of London, and of a Committee Meeting being in contemplation, he wrote thus in answer—"Your letter, just arrived, put—I was going to say, another soul into my little body; at least it has added new life to the soul I have. I cannot be contented with the thought of being absent from your proposed meeting. No, no; I must be there, (for my own sake I mean) and try to sing with you, "O'er the gloomy hills of darkness."*

In August, the same year, having received a letter from India, he wrote to Mr. Fuller as follows—"Brother Carey speaks in such a manner of the effects of the gospel in his neighbourhood, as in my view promises a fair illustration of our Lord's parable, when he compared the kingdom of heaven to a little leaven, hid in three measures of meal, which insinuated itself so effectually as to leaven the lump at last. Blessed be God, the leaven is already in the meal. The fermentation is begun; and my hopes were never half so strong as they are now, that the whole shall be effectually leavened. O THAT I WERE THERE TO WITNESS THE DELIGHTFUL PROCESS! But whither am I running?—I LONG TO WRITE YOU FROM HINDOSTAN!"

On receiving other letters from India, in January, 1797, he thus writes:—"Perhaps

* The 428th Hymn of Dr. Rippon's Selection.

you are now rejoicing in spirit with me over fresh intelligence from Bengal. This moment have I concluded reading two letters from brother Thomas: one to the Society, and the other to myself. He speaks of others from brother Carey. I hope they are already in your possession. If his correspondence has produced the same effects on your heart as brother Thomas's has on mine, you are filled with gladness and hope. I am grieved that I cannot convey them to you immediately. I long to witness the pleasure their contents will impart to all whose hearts are with us. O that I were accounted worthy of the Lord to preach the gospel to the Booteas!"

It has been already observed, that for a month preceding the decision of the Committee, he resolved to devote one day in every week to secret prayer and fasting, and to keep a *diary* of the exercises of his mind during the whole of that period. This diary was not shown to the Committee at that time, but merely the preceding *narrative*. Since his death a few of them have perused it; and have been almost ready to think, that if they had seen it before, they dare not oppose his going. But the Lord hath taken him to himself. It no longer remains a question now, whether he shall labour in England or in India. A few passages, however, from this transcript of his heart, while contemplating a

great and disinterested undertaking, will furnish a better idea of his character than could be given by any other hand.

“Oct. 8, 1794. Had some remarkable freedom and affection this morning, both in family and secret prayer. With many tears I dedicated myself, body and soul, to the service of Jesus; and earnestly implored full satisfaction respecting the path of duty.—I feel a growing deadness for all earthly comforts; and derive my happiness immediately from God himself. May I still endure, as Moses did, by seeing him who is invisible!

“Oct. 10. Enjoyed much freedom to-day in the family. Whilst noticing in prayer the state of the millions of heathen who know not God, I felt the aggregate value of their immortal souls with peculiar energy.

“Afterwards was much struck whilst (on my knees before God in secret) I read the fourth chapter of Micah. The ninth verse I fancied very applicable to the church in Cannon-street: but what reason is there for such a cry about so insignificant a worm as I am? The third chapter of Habakkuk too well expresses that mixture of *solemnity* and *confidence* with which I contemplate the work of the mission.

“Whilst at prayer-meeting to-night, I learned more of the meaning of some passages

of scripture than ever before. Suitable frames of soul are like good lights, in which a painting appears to its full advantage. I had often meditated on Phil. iii. 7, 8, and Gal. vi. 14: but never *felt* crucifixion to the world, and disesteem for all that it contains as at that time. All prospects of pecuniary independence, and growing reputation, with which, in unworthier moments, I had amused myself, were now chased from my mind; and the desire of living *wholly* to Christ swallowed up every other thought. Frowns and smiles, fullness or want, honour and reproach, were now equally indifferent; and when I concluded the meeting, my whole soul felt, as it were, going after the lost sheep of Christ among the heathen.

“I do feel a growing satisfaction in the proposal of spending my whole life in something nobler than the locality of this island will admit. I long to raise my Master’s banner in climes where the sound of his fame hath but scarcely reached. He hath said, for my encouragement, that *all* nations shall flow unto it.

“The conduct and success of Stach, Boonish, and other Moravian missionaries in Greenland, both confound and stimulate me. O Lord, forgive my past indolence in thy service, and help me to redeem the residue of my days for exertions more worthy a friend of mankind, and a servant of God.

“Oct. 13. Being taken up with visitors the former part of the day, I spent the after part in application to the Bengal language, and found the difficulties I apprehended vanish as fast as I encountered them. I read and prayed, prayed and read, and made no small advances. Blessed be God!

“Oct. 15. There are in Birmingham 50,000 inhabitants; and exclusive of the vicinity, ten ministers who preach the fundamental truths of the gospel. In Hindostan there are twice as many millions of inhabitants; and not so many gospel preachers. Now Jesus Christ hath commanded his ministers to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. Why should we be so disproportionate in our labours? Peculiar circumstances must not be urged against positive commands: I am therefore bound, if others do not go, to make the means more proportionate to the multitude.

“To-night, reading some letters from brother Carey, in which he speaks of his wife’s illness when she first came into the country, I endeavoured to realize myself not only with a sick, but a *dead* wife. The thought was like a cold dagger to my heart at first; but on recollection I considered that the same God ruled in India as in Europe; and that he could either preserve her, or support me, as well there as here. My business is only to be

where he would have me. Other things I leave to him. O Lord, though with timidity, yet I hope not without satisfaction, I look every possible evil in the face, and say, ‘Thy will be done.’

“Oct. 17. This is the first day I have set apart for extraordinary devotion in relation to my present exercise of mind. Rose earlier than usual, and began the day in prayer that God would be with me in every part of it, and grant that the end I have in view may be clearly ascertained—the knowledge of his will.

“Considering the importance of the work before me, I began at the foundation of all religion, and reviewed the grounds on which I stood; the being of a God, the relation of mankind to him, with the divine inspiration of the scriptures; and the review afforded me great satisfaction.* I also compared the different religions which claimed divine origin, and found little difficulty in determining which had most internal evidence of its divinity. I

* There is a wide difference between admitting these principles in theory, and *making use of them*. David might have worn Saul’s accoutrements at a parade: but in meeting Goliath he must go forth in an armour that had been *tried*. A mariner may sit in his cabin at his ease while the ship is in harbour: but ere he undertakes a voyage he must examine its soundness, and whether it will endure the storms which may overtake him.

attentively read, and seriously considered Doddridge's three excellent sermons on the evidences of the Christian religion, which was followed by such conviction, that I had hardly patience to conclude the book before I fell on my knees before God to bless him for such a religion, established on such a basis; and I have received more *solid* satisfaction this day upon the subject than ever I did before.

“Oct. 18. I dreamed that I saw one of the christian Hindoos. O how I loved him! I long to realize my dream. Surely then will come to pass the saying that is written, ‘In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, all are ONE in him.’

“Have been happy to-day in completing the manuscript of Periodical Accounts. Any thing relative to the salvation of the heathen, brings a certain pleasure with it. I find I cannot pray, nor converse, nor read, nor study, nor preach with satisfaction, without reference to this subject.

“In the evening I found some little difficulty with the language; but considering how merchants and captains overcome this difficulty for the sake of wealth, I sat confounded before the Lord that I should ever have indulged such a thought; and looking up to him, I set about it with cheerfulness, and found that I was making a sensible advance, al-

though I can never apply till 11 o'clock at night, on account of my other duties.*

“Preached from 2 Kings, iv. 26. ‘It is well.’ Was much enlarged both in thought and expression. Whilst speaking of the satisfaction enjoyed by a truly pious mind, when it feels itself in all circumstances and times in the hand of a *good God*, I felt, that were the universe destroyed, and I the only being in it, beside God, HE is fully adequate to my complete happiness; and had I been in an African wood, surrounded with venomous serpents, devouring beasts, and savage men, in such a frame, I should be the subject of perfect peace and exalted joy. Yes, O my God, thou hast taught me that THOU *alone* art worthy of my confidence; and with this sentiment fixed in my heart, I am free from all solicitude about any temporal prospects or concerns. If *thy* presence be enjoyed, poverty shall be

* Night studies, often continued till two or three o'clock in the morning, it is to be feared, were the first occasion of impairing Mr. Pearce's health, and brought on that train of nervous sensations with which he was afterwards afflicted. Though not much accustomed to converse on this subject, he once acknowledged to a brother in the ministry, that owing to his enervated state, he sometimes dreaded the approach of public services to such a degree, that he would rather have submitted to stripes than engage in them; and that while in the pulpit, he was frequently distressed with the apprehension of falling over it.

riches, darkness light, affliction prosperity, reproach my honour, and fatigue my rest: and thou hast said, 'My presence shall go with thee.' Enough, Lord, I ask for nothing, nothing more.

"But how sad the proofs of our depravity; and how insecure the best frames we enjoy! Returning home, a wicked expression from a person who passed me caught my ear, and occurred so often to my thoughts for some minutes, as to bring guilt upon my mind, and overwhelm me with shame before God. But I appealed to God for my hatred of all such things, secretly confessed the sin of my heart, and again ventured to the mercy-seat. On such occasions, how precious a Mediator is to the soul.

"Oct. 23. Have found a little time to apply to the Bengalee language. How pleasant it is to work for God! Love transforms thorns to roses, and makes pain itself a pleasure. I never sat down to any study with such peculiar and continued satisfaction. The thought of exalting the Redeemer in this language, is a spur to my application paramount to every discouragement for want of a living tutor. I have passed this day with an abiding satisfaction respecting my present views.

"Oct. 24. O for the enlightening, enlivening, and sanctifying presence of God to-day! It is the *second* of those days of extraordinary

devotion which I have set apart for seeking God, in relation to the mission. How shall I spend it? I will devote the morning to prayer, reading, and meditation; and the afternoon to visiting the wretched, and relieving the needy. May God accept my services, guide me by his counsel, and employ me for his praise!

“Having besought the Lord that he would not suffer me to deceive myself in so important a matter as that which I had now retired to consider, and exercised some confidence that he would be the rewarder of those who diligently seek him, I read the 119th Psalm at the conclusion of my prayer, and felt and wondered at the congruity of so many of the verses to the breathings of my own heart. Often, with holy admiration, I paused, and read, and thought, and prayed over the verse again, especially verses 20, 31, 59, 60, 112, 145, 146. ‘My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times. I have stuck unto thy testimonies; O Lord, put me not to shame.’

“Most of the morning I spent in seriously reading Mr. Horne’s *Letters on Missions*, having first begged of the Lord to make the perusal profitable to my instruction in the path of duty. To the interrogation, ‘Which of you will forsake all, deny himself, take up his cross, and, if God pleases, die for his religion?’ I replied spontaneously, Blessed be

God, I am willing! Lord, help me to accomplish it!

“Closed this season with reading the 61st and 62d chapters of Isaiah, and prayer for the church of God at large, my own congregation, the heathens, the society, brethren Thomas and Carey, all missionaries whom God hath sent of every denomination, my own case, my wife and family, and for assistance in my work.

“The after part of this day has been gloomy indeed. All the painful circumstances which can attend my going have met upon my heart, and formed a load almost insupportable. A number of things, which have been some time accumulating, have united their pressure, and made me groan being burdened. Whilst at a prayer-meeting I looked round on my Christian friends, and said to myself, A few months more, and probably I shall leave you all! But in the deepest of my gloom, I resolved though faint yet to pursue, not doubting but my Lord would give me strength equal to the day.

“I had scarcely formed this resolution before it occurred, My Lord and Master was a man of sorrows. Oppressed, and covered with blood, he cried, ‘If it be possible, let this cup pass from me.’ Yet in the depth of his agonies, he added, ‘Thy will be done.’ This thought was to me what the sight of the cross was to Bunyan’s pilgrim; I lost my burden.

Spent the remainder of the meeting in sweet communion with God.

“But on coming home, the sight of Mrs. Pearce replaced my load. She had for some time been much discouraged at the thoughts of going. I therefore felt reluctant to say any thing on this subject, thinking it would be unpleasant to her: but though I strove to conceal it, an involuntary sigh betrayed my uneasiness. She kindly inquired the cause. I avoided at first an explanation, till she, guessing the reason, said to this effect—‘I hope you will be no more uneasy on *my* account. For the last two or three days, I have been more comfortable than ever in the thought of going. I have considered the steps you are pursuing to know the mind of God, and I think you cannot take more proper ones. When you consult the ministers, you should represent your obstacles as strongly as your inducements; and then, if they advise your going, though the parting from my friends will be almost insupportable, yet I will make myself as happy as I can, and God can make me happy any where.’

“Should this little Diary fall into the hands of a man having the soul of a missionary, circumstanced as I am, he will be the only man capable of sharing my peace, my joy, my gratitude, my rapture of soul. Thus at evening tide it is light; thus God brings his people

through fire and through water into a wealthy place; thus those who ask do receive, and their joy is full. O love the Lord, ye his saints: there is no want to them that fear him!

“Oct. 28. Still panting to preach Jesus among my fellow sinners to whom he is yet unknown. Wrote to Dr. Rogers, of Philadelphia, to-day, upon the subject, with freedom and warmth, and inquired whether, whilst the people of the United States were forming societies to encourage arts, liberty, and emigration, there could not a few be found among them who would form a society for the transmission of the word of life to the benighted heathens; or in case that could not be, whether they might not strengthen our hands in Europe, by some benevolent proofs of concurring with us in a design, which they speak of with such approbation? With this I sent Horne’s Letters. I will follow both with my prayers, and who can tell?

“Oct. 29. Looked over the Code of Hindoo Laws to-day. How much is there to admire in it, founded on the principles of justice. The most salutary regulations are adopted in many circumstances. But what a pity that so much excellence should be abased by laws to establish or countenance idolatry, magic, prostitution, prayers for the dead, false-witnessing, theft and suicide. How perfect is the morality of the gospel of Jesus; and how desirable

that they should embrace it! Ought not means to be used? Can we assist them too soon? There is reason to think that their Shasters* were penned soon after the deluge: and are not 4000 years long enough for 100 millions of men to be under the empire of the devil?

“Oct. 31. I am encouraged to enter upon this day (which I set apart for supplicating God) by a recollection of his promises to those who seek him. If the sacred word be true, the servants of God can never seek his face in vain; and as I am conscious of my sincerity and earnest desire only to know his pleasure that I may perform it, I find a degree of confidence that I shall realize the fulfilment of the word on which he causeth me to hope.

“Began the day with solemn prayer for the assistance of the Holy Spirit in my present exercise, that so I might enjoy the spirit and power of prayer, and have my personal religion improved, as well as my public steps directed. In this duty I found a little quickening.

“I then read over the narrative of my experience, and my journal. I find my views are still the same; but my heart is much more established than when I began to write.

“Was much struck in reading Paul's words in 2 Cor. i. 17, when after speaking of

* The sacred books of the Hindoos.

his purpose to travel for the preaching of the gospel, he saith, ‘Did I then use lightness when I was thus minded? Or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea, yea—nay, nay?’ The *piety* of the apostle in not purposing after the flesh, the *seriousness* of spirit with which he formed his designs, and his steadfast adherence to them, were in my view worthy of the highest admiration and strictest imitation.

“Thinking that I might get some assistance from David Brainerd’s experience, I read his life to the time of his being appointed a missionary among the Indians. The exalted devotion of that dear man almost made me question mine. Yet at some seasons he speaks of sinking as well as rising. His singular piety excepted, his feelings, prayers, desires, comforts, hopes, and sorrows, are my own; and if I could follow him in nothing else, I knew I had been enabled to say this with him, ‘I feel exceedingly calm, and quite resigned to God respecting my future improvement (or station) *when* and *where* he pleased. My faith lifted me above the world, and removed all those mountains, which I could not look over of late. I thought I wanted not the favour of man to lean upon; for I knew God’s favour was infinitely better, and that it was no matter *where* or *when* or *how* Christ should send

me, nor with what trials he should still exercise me, if I might be prepared for his work and will.*

“Read the ii. iii. iv. v. and vi. chapters of the second epistle to the Corinthians. Felt a kind of placidity, but not much joy. On beginning the concluding prayer, I had no strength to wrestle, nor power with God at all. I seemed as one desolate and forsaken. I prayed for myself, the society, the missionaries, the converted Hindoos, the church in Cannon-street, my family, and ministry; but yet all was dulness, and I feared I had offended the Lord. I felt but little zeal for the mission, and was about to conclude with a lamentation over the hardness of my heart; when of a sudden it pleased God to smite the rock with the rod of his Spirit, and immediately the waters began to flow. O what a heavenly, glorious, melting power was it! My eyes, almost closed with weeping, hardly suffer me to write. I feel it over again. O what a view of the love of a crucified Redeemer did I enjoy! the attractions of his cross, how powerful! The Bible lying open before me (upon my knees) many passages caught my eye and confirmed the purposes of my heart. If ever in my life I knew any thing of the influences

* The Life of Brainerd is published by the American S. S. Union.

of the Holy Spirit, I did at this time. I was swallowed up in God. Hunger, fulness, cold, heat, friends, and enemies, all seemed nothing before God. I was in a new world. All was delightful; for Christ was all, and in all. Many times I concluded prayer, but when rising from my knees, communion with God was so desirable, that I was sweetly drawn to it again and again, till my animal strength was almost exhausted. Then I thought it would be pleasure to *burn* for God.

“And now while I write, such a heavenly sweetness fills my soul, that no exterior circumstances can remove it; and I do uniformly feel, that the more I am thus, the more I pant for the service of my blessed Jesus among the heathen. Yes, my dear, my dying Lord, I am thine, thy servant; and if I neglect the service of so good a Master, I may well expect a guilty conscience in life, and a death awful as that of Judas or of Spira!

“This evening I had a meeting with my friends. Returned much dejected. Reviewed a letter from brother Fuller, which, though he says he has many objections to my going, yet is so affectionately expressed as to yield me a gratification.

“Nov. 3. This evening received a letter from brother Ryland, containing many objections: but contradiction itself is pleasant when it is the voice of judgment mingled with affection.

I wish to remember that *I may be mistaken*, though I cannot say I am at present convinced that it is so. I am happy to find that brother Ryland approves of my referring it to the Committee. I have much confidence in the judgment of my brethren, and hope I shall be perfectly satisfied with their advice. I do think, however, if they knew how earnestly I pant for the work, it would be impossible for them to withhold their ready acquiescence. O Lord, thou knowest my sincerity, and that if I go not to the work it will not be owing to any reluctance on my part! If I stay in England, I fear I shall be a poor useless drone; or if a sense of duty prompt me to activity, I doubt whether I shall ever know inward peace and joy again. O Lord, I am, thou knowest I am *oppressed*; undertake for me!

“Nov. 5. At times to-day I have been reconciled to the thought of staying if any brethren should so advise; but at other times I seem to think I could not. I look at brother Carey’s portrait as it hangs in my study; I love him in the bowels of Jesus Christ, and long to join his labours; every look calls up a hundred thoughts, all of which inflame my desire to be a fellow-labourer with him in the work of the Lord. One thing, however, I am resolved upon, that, the Lord keeping me, if I cannot go abroad, I will do all I can to serve the mission at home.”

The result of the Committee Meeting has already been related; together with the state of his mind, as far as could be collected from his letters, for some time after it. The termination of these tender and interesting exercises, and of all his other labours, in so speedy a removal from the present scene of action, may teach us not to draw any certain conclusion as to the designs of God concerning our future labours, from the ardour or sincerity of our feelings. He may take it well that "it was in our hearts to build him an house," though he should for wise reasons have determined not to gratify us.



CHAPTER III.

His exercises and labours, from the time of his giving up the idea of going abroad, to the commencement of his last affliction.

HAD the multiplied labours of this excellent man permitted his keeping a regular diary, we may see by the foregoing specimen of a single month, what a rich store of truly Christian experience would have pervaded these Memoirs. We should then have been better able to trace the gradual openings of his holy mind, and the springs of that extraordinary unction

of spirit, and energy of action, by which his life was distinguished. As it is, we can only collect a few gleanings, partly from memory, and partly from letters communicated by his friends.

This chapter will include a period of about four years, during which he went twice to London to collect for the *Baptist mission*, and once he visited Dublin, at the invitation of the *Evangelical Society* in that city.

There appears throughout the general tenor of his life, a singular submissiveness to the will of God; and what is worthy of notice, this disposition was generally most conspicuous when his own will was most counteracted. The justness of this remark is sufficiently apparent from his letter to Mrs. Pearce, of Nov. 13, 1794,* after the decision of the Committee; and the same spirit was carried into the common concerns of life. Thus, about a month afterwards, when his dear Louisa was ill of a fever, he thus writes from Northampton to Mrs. Pearce:—

“My dear Sarah,

December 13, 1794.

“I am just brought on the wings of celestial mercy safe to my Sabbath’s station. I am well; and my dear friends here seem healthy and happy: but I feel for *you*. I long

* See page 32.

to know how our dear Louisa's pulse beats: I fear still feverish. We must not, however, suffer ourselves to be infected with a mental fever on this account. Is she ill? It is right. Is she very ill?—dying? It still is right. Is she gone to join the heavenly choristers? It is all right, notwithstanding our repinings—Repinings! no; we will not repine. It is best she should go. It is best for *her*. This we must allow. It is best for *us*. Do we expect it? O what poor, ungrateful, short-sighted worms are we! Let us submit, my Sarah, till we come to heaven: if we do not *then* see that it is best, let us then complain. But why do I attempt to console? Perhaps an indulgent Providence has ere now dissipated your fears: or if that same *kind Providence* has removed our babe, you have consolation enough in him who suffered more than we; and more than enough to quiet all our passions, in that astonishing consideration,—‘*God so loved the world, that he spared not his own Son.*’ Did God cheerfully give the holy child Jesus for us? and shall we refuse our child to him! He gave his Son to *suffer*: he takes our children to *enjoy*: Yes, to enjoy *himself*.

Yours, with the tenderest regard, S. P.”

In June, 1795, he attended the Association at Kettering, partly on account of some mis

sionary business there to be transacted. That was a season of great joy to many, especially the last forenoon previous to parting. From thence he wrote to Mrs. Pearce as follows:—

“From a pew in the house of God at Kettering, with my cup of joy running over, I address you by the hand of brother Simmons. Had it pleased Divine Providence to have permitted your accompanying me, my pleasures would have received no small addition; because I should have hoped that you would have been filled with similar consolation, and have received equal edification by the precious means of grace on which I have attended. Indeed, I never remember to have enjoyed a public meeting to such a high degree since I have been in the habit of attending upon them. Oh that I may return to you, and the dear church of God, in the *fulness* of the blessing of the gospel of Christ! I hope, my beloved, that you are not without the enjoyment of the sweetness and the supports of the blessed gospel. Oh that you may get and keep near to God, and in *him* find infinitely more than you can possibly lose by your husband’s absence!

“Mr. Hall preached, last evening, from 1 Pet. i. 8. A most evangelical and experimental season! I was charmed and warmed. Oh that Jesus may go on to reveal himself to

him as altogether lovely! I am unable to write more now. To-day I set off for Northampton, and preach there to-night. The Lord bless you!"

In July, 1795, he received a pressing invitation from *The General Evangelical Society* in Dublin, to pay them a visit, and to assist in diffusing the gospel of the grace of God in that kingdom. To this invitation he replied in the following letter, addressed to Dr. M'Dowal:—

Birmingham, August 3, 1795.

"Rev. and dear Sir,

"I received your favour of the 22d ult. and for the interesting reason you assign, transmit a 'speedy answer.' The Society, on whose behalf you wrote, I have ever considered with the respect due to the real friends of the best of causes—the cause of God and of his Christ: a cause which embraces the most important and durable interests of our fellow men: and your name, dear sir, I have been taught to hold in more than common esteem by my dear brother and father, Messrs. Birt and Francis. The benevolent institution which you are engaged in supporting, I am persuaded deserves more than the good wishes or prayers of your brethren in the kingdom and patience of Jesus, on this side the channel;

and it will yield me substantial pleasure to afford personal assistance in your pious labours. But, for the present, I am sorry to say, I must decline your proposal: being engaged to spend a month in London this autumn, on the business of our *Mission Society*, of which you have probably heard.

“When I formed my present connexions with the church in Birmingham, I proposed an annual freedom for six weeks from my pastoral duties; and should the ‘Evangelical Society’ express a wish for my services the ensuing year, I am perfectly inclined, God willing, to spend that time beneath their direction, and at what part of the year they conceive a visit would be most serviceable to the good design. I only request, that should this be their desire, I may receive the information as soon as they can conveniently decide, that I may withhold myself from other engagements, which may interfere with the time they may appoint. I entreat you to make my Christian respects acceptable to the gentlemen who compose the society, and assure yourself that I am, dear sir, respectfully and affectionately,

Your brother in our Lord Jesus, S. P.”

The invitation was repeated, and he complied with their request, engaging to go over in the month of June, 1796.

A little before this journey, it occurred to Dr. Ryland, that a mission into Cornwall might be of use to the cause of true religion, and that two acceptable ministers might be induced to undertake it; and that if executed during the vacation at the Bristol Academy, two of the students might supply their place. He communicated his thoughts to Mr. Pearce, who wrote thus in answer:—

May 30, 1796.

“ My very dear Brother,

“ I thank you a thousand times for your last letter. Blessed be God, who hath put it into your heart to propose such a plan for increasing the boundaries of Zion. I have read your letter to our wisest friends here, and they heard it with great joy. The plan, the place, the mode, the persons—all, *all* meet our most affectionate wishes. How did such a scheme never enter our minds before! Alas, we have nothing in our hearts that is worth having, save what God puts there. Do write to me when at Dublin, and tell me whether it be resolved on; when they set out, &c. I hope ere long to hear, that as many disciples are employed in Great Britain, as the Saviour employed in Judea. When he gives the word, great will be the company of the preachers.

“ Oh, my dear brother, let us go on still

praying, contriving, labouring, defending, until 'the little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, and the small stone from the mountain fill the whole earth.'

“What pleasures do those lose who have no interest in God's gracious and holy cause! How thankful should we be, that we are not strangers to the joy which the friends of Zion feel when the Lord turneth again Zion's captivity. I am, beyond expression,

Your affectionate brother in Christ, S. P.”

On May 31, he set off for Dublin, and “the Lord prospered his way, so that he arrived at the time appointed; and from every account it appears, that he was not only sent *in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of peace*, but that the Lord himself went with him. His preaching was not only highly acceptable to every class of hearers, but the word came from him with power, and there is abundant reason to believe, that many will, through eternity, praise God for sending his message to them by this dear ambassador of Christ. His memory lives in their hearts, and they join with the other churches of Christ in deploring the loss they have sustained by his death.

“He was earnestly solicited by the *Evangelical Society* to renew his visit to that kingdom, in 1798. Ready to embrace every call

of duty, he had signified his compliance; and the time was fixed: but the breaking out of the rebellion prevented him from realizing his intention. This was a painful disappointment to many, who wished once more to see his face, and to have heard the glad tidings from his lips."

Such is the brief account of his visit to Dublin, given by Dr. M'Dowal. The following letter was written to Mrs. Pearce, when he had been there a little more than a week:—

Dublin, June 31, 1796.

"I long to know how you do, and you will be as much concerned to know how I go on at this distance from you. I haste to satisfy your inquiries.

"I am in perfect health: am delightfully disappointed with the place, and its inhabitants. I am very thankful that I came over. I have found much more religion here already than I expected to meet with during the whole of my stay. The prospect of usefulness is flattering. I have already many more friends (I hope *Christian* friends) than I can gratify by visits. Many doors are open for preaching the gospel in the city; and my country excursions will probably be few. Thus much for outline.

"But you will like to know how I spend my time, &c. Well then—I am at the house

of Mr. H——, late High-Sheriff for the city: a gentleman of opulence, respectability and evangelical piety. He is by profession a Presbyterian; an elder of Dr. M'Dowal's church; has a most amiable wife, and four children. I am very thankful for being placed here during my stay. I am quite at home, I mean as to ease and familiarity; for as to *style* of living, I neither do, nor desire to equal it. Yet in my present situation it is convenient. It would, however, be sickening and dull, had I not a God to go to, to converse with, to enjoy, and to call *my own*. Oh, 'tis this, 'tis *this*, my dearest Sarah, which gives a point to every enjoyment, and sweetens all the cup of life.

“The Lord's day after I wrote to you last, I preached for Dr. M'Dowal in the morning, at half past eleven; heard a Mr. Kilburne at five; and preached again at Plunket-street at seven. On Tuesday evening I preached at an hospital, and on Thursday evening at Plunket-street again. Yesterday, for the Baptists in the morning, Dr. M'Dowal at five, and at Plunket-street at seven.

“The hours of worship will appear singular to you: they depend on the usual *meal* times. We breakfast at ten; dine between four and five, sometimes between five and six; take tea from seven to nine; and sup from ten to twelve.

“I thank God that I possess an abiding determination to aim at the *consciences* of the people in every discourse. I have borne the most positive testimony against the prevailing evils of professors here:—as, sensuality, gaiety, vain amusements, neglect of the Sabbath, &c. and last night, told an immense crowd of professors of the first rank, ‘that if they made custom and fashion their plea, they were awfully deluding their souls; for it had always been the fashion to insult God, to dissipate time, and to pursue the broad road to hell; but it would not lessen their torments there, that the way to damnation was the fashion.’

“I expected my faithfulness would have given them offence; but I am persuaded it was the way to please the Lord, and those whom I expected would be enemies, are not only at peace with me, but even renounce their sensual indulgences to attend on my ministry. I do assuredly believe that God hath sent me hither for good. The five o’clock meetings are miserably attended in general. In a house that will hold 1,500, or 2,000 people, you will hardly see above fifty! Yesterday morning I preached on the subject of *public worship*, from Psalm v. 7, and seriously warned them against preferring their bellies to God, and their own houses to his. I was delighted and surprised, at the five

o'clock meeting to see the place nearly full. Surely this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in my eyes. Never, never did I more feel how weak I am in myself,—a mere nothing; and how strong I am in the omnipotence of God. I feel a superiority to all fear, and possess a conscious dignity in being the ambassador of God. Oh help me to praise, for it is he alone who teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight: and still pray for me; for if he withdraw for a moment, I become as weak and unprofitable as the briars of the wilderness.

“You cannot think how much I am supported by the assurance that I have left a *praying people* at Birmingham; and I believe, that in answer to their prayers I have hitherto been wonderfully assisted in my public work, as well as enjoyed much in private devotion.

“I have formed a most pleasing acquaintance with several serious young men in the University here, and with two of the fellows of the College; most pious gentlemen indeed, who have undergone a world of reproach for Christ and his gospel, and have been forbidden to preach in the churches by the Archbishop; but God has raised another house for them here, where they preach with much success, and have begun a meeting in the College, which promises fresh prosperity to the cause of Jesus.”

The following particulars, in addition to the above, are taken partly from some notes in his own hand writing, and partly from the account given by his friend, Mr. Summers, who accompanied him during the latter part of his visits.

At his first arrival, the congregations were but thinly attended, and the Baptist congregation in particular, amongst whom he delivered several discourses. It much affected him to see the whole city given to sensuality and worldly conformity; and especially to find those of his own denomination amongst the lowest, and least affected with their condition. But the longer he continued, the more the congregations increased, and every opportunity became increasingly interesting, both to him and them. His faithful remonstrances, and earnest recommendations of prayer meetings to his Baptist friends, though at first apparently ill received, were well taken in the end; and he had the happiness to see in them some hopeful appearances of a return to God. On June the 20th he wrote to his friend, Mr Summers, as follows:—

“ My dear Friend,

“ If you mean to abide by my opinion, I say, come to Dublin, and come directly! I have been most delightfully disappointed. I expect-

ed darkness, and behold light; sorrow, and I have had cause for abundant joy. I thank God that I came hither, and hope that many as well as myself, will have cause to praise him. Never have I been more deeply taught my own nothingness; never hath the power of God more evidently rested upon me. The harvest here is great indeed; and the Lord of the harvest hath enabled me to labour in it with delight.

‘I praise him for all that is past,
I trust him for all that’s to come.’

“The Lord hath of late been doing great things for Dublin. Several of the young men in the college have been awakened; and two of the fellows are sweet evangelical preachers. One of them is of a spirit serene as the summer evening, and sweet as the breath of May. I am already intimate with them, and have spent several mornings in college with various students, who bid fair to be faithful watchmen on Jerusalem’s walls. But I hope you will come; and then you will see for yourself. If not, I will give you some pleasant details when we meet in England. S. P.”

Mr. Summers complied with this invitation; and of the last seven or eight days of Mr. Pearce’s continuance at Dublin, he himself thus writes:—

“Monday, July 4. At three in the afternoon I went with my friend, Mr. Summers, to Mr. K——’s. Spent a very agreeable day, Miss A. K—— remarked two wonders in Dublin: a praying society, composed of students at college, and another of lawyers. The family were called together. We sung: I read, and expounded the xii. of Isaiah, and prayed. At seven we went to a prayer-meeting at Plunket-street: very large attendance. Mr. R—— and Mr. S—— prayed, and I spoke from Rom. x. 12, 13. ‘There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all who call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved.’ Many seemed affected. After I had closed, I told them some of my own experience, and requested, that if any present wished for conversation, they would come to me, either that evening, or on Thursday evening in the vestry. Five persons came in:—one had been long impressed with religion, but could never summon courage enough to open her heart before. Another, a Miss W——, attributed her first impression, under God, to my ministry; and told me that her father had regularly attended of late, and that her mother was so much alarmed as to be almost in despair. Poor girl! she seemed truly in earnest about her own soul, and as much concerned for her

parents. The next had possessed a serious concern for some time, and of late had been much revived. One young lady, a Miss H——, staid in the meeting-house, exceedingly affected indeed. Mr. K—— spoke to her—She said, she would speak with me on Thursday.

“Tuesday, 5th. Went to Leislip. At seven—preached to a large and affected auditory.

During his labours in Dublin, he was strongly solicited to settle in a very flattering situation in the neighbourhood;* and a very liberal salary was offered him. On his positively declining it, mention was made of only *six months* of the year. When that was declined, *three months* were proposed; and when he was about to answer this in the negative, the party refused to receive his answer, desiring him to take time to consider of it. He did so; and though he entertained a very grateful sense of the kindness and generosity expressed by the proposal, yet after the maturest deliberation, he thought it his duty to decline it. Mr. Pearce's modesty prevented his talking on such a subject; but it was known at the time by his friend who accompanied him, and since his death, has been frequently mentioned as an instance of his disinterested spirit.

* At the *Black Rock*, the residence of some of the most genteel families in the vicinity of Dublin.

His friends at Birmingham were ready to think it hard that he should be so willing to leave them to go on a mission among the heathen; but they could not well complain, and much less think ill of him, when they saw that such a willingness was more than could be effected by the most flattering prospects of a worldly nature, accompanied too with promising appearances of religious usefulness.

About a month after his return from Dublin, Mr. Pearce addressed a letter to Mr. Carey, in which he gives some farther account of Ireland, as well as of some other interesting matters:—

Birmingham, Aug. 12, 1796.

“With pleasure approaching to rapture, I read the last accounts you sent us. I never expected immediate success: the prospect is truly greater than my most sanguine hopes. ‘The kingdom of heaven is like to a little leaven hid in three measures of meal, till the *whole* is leavened.’ Blessed be God! the leaven is in the meal, and its influence is already discoverable. A great God is doing great things by you. Go on, my dearest brother, go on; God will do greater things than these. Jesus is worthy of a *world* of praise: and shall *Hindustan* not praise him? Surely he shall see of the travail of his soul

there, and the sower and the reaper shall rejoice together. Already the empire of darkness totters, and soon it shall doubtless fall. Blessed be the labourers in this important work; and blessed be *He* who giveth them hearts and strength to labour, and promises that they shall not labour in vain!

“Do not fear the want of money. *God* is for us, and the silver and the gold are his; and so are the hearts of those who possess the most of it. I will travel from the Land’s End to the Orkneys but we will get money enough for all the demands of the mission. I have never had a fear on that head: a little exertion will do wonders; and past experience justifies every confidence. *Men*, we only want; and God shall find them for us in due time.

“As to my public work, I find, whilst engaged in it, little cause to complain for want either of matter or words. My labours are acceptable, and not altogether unprofitable to the hearers: but what is this to me, if my own soul starves whilst others are fed by me? Oh, my brother, I need your prayers, and I feel a great satisfaction in the hope that you do not forget me. Oh that I may be kept faithful unto death! Indeed, in the midst of my struggles, a gleam of hope, that I shall at last awake in the likeness of God, affords me greater joy than words can express. To be with

Christ, is far better than to continue sinning here: but if the Lord hath any thing to do by me, his will be done.

“I have never so fully opened my case to any one before. Your freedom on similar topics encourages me to make my complaint to you, and I think if you were near me, I should feel great relief in revealing to you all my heart. But I shall fatigue you with my moanings; so I will have done on this subject.

“It is not long since I returned from a kind of mission to *Ireland*. A society is established in Dublin for the purpose of inviting from England, ministers of various denominations, to assist in promoting the interests of the kingdom of Christ there. Some of our brethren had been there before me, as Rippon, Langdon, Francis, and Birt; and I think the plan is calculated for usefulness. I have, at Dr. Rippon’s request, sent him some remarks on my visit, for the Register; but as it is probable you will receive this before that comes to hand, I will say something of my excursion here.

“Having engaged to spend six Lord’s days in that kingdom, I arrived there the day before the first Sabbath in June. I first made myself acquainted with the general state of religion in Dublin.

“The inhabitants of Dublin seem to be chiefly composed of two classes: the one as-

sume the appearance of opulence; the other exhibit marks of the most abject poverty: and as there are no parishes in Ireland which provide for the poor, many die every year for want of the necessaries of life. .

“Most of the rich are by profession protestants; the poor are nearly all papists, and strongly prejudiced against the reformed religion. Their ignorance and superstition are scarcely inferior to your miserable Hindoos. On midsummer day I had an affecting proof of the latter. On the public road, about a mile from Dublin, is a well, which was once included in the precincts of a priory, dedicated to St. John of Jerusalem. This well is in high repute for curing a number of bodily complaints, and its virtues are said to be most efficacious on the saint’s own day. So from twelve o’clock at night, for twenty-four hours, it becomes the rendezvous for all the lame, blind, and otherwise diseased people, within a circuit of twenty miles. Here they brought old and young, and applied the ‘holy water,’ both internally and externally; some by pouring, some by immersion, and all by drinking: whilst, for the good of those who could not come in person, their friends filled bottles with the efficacious water to use at home. Several I saw on their knees before the well, at their devotions, who were not unfrequently interrupted with a glass of whiskey. With

this they were supplied from a number of dealers in that article, who kept standings all round the well.

“Near the spot, was a church-yard, where great numbers kneeled upon the tombs of their deceased relatives, and appeared earnestly engaged in praying for the repose of their souls.

“It was truly a lamentable sight. My heart ached at their delusions, whilst I felt gratitude, I hope unfeigned, for an acquaintance with the water of life, of which, if a man drink, he shall live for ever.

“There are few, or none, of the middle class to connect the rich and the poor; so that favourable access to them is far more difficult than to the lower orders of the people in England; and their priests hold them in such bondage, that if a catholic servant only attend on family worship in a protestant house, penance must be performed for the offence.

S. P.”

Mention has already been made of his having “formed a pleasing acquaintance with several serious young gentlemen of the University of Dublin.” The following letter was addressed to one of them, the Rev. Mr. Matthias, a few months after his return:—

“Dear Brother Matthias,

“I have been employed this whole day in writing letters to Dublin; and it is the first

day I have been able to redeem for that purpose. I will not consume a page in apology. Let it suffice to say, that necessity, not disinclination, has detained from my Irish friends, those proofs of my gratitude and esteem, which in other circumstances I ought to have presented three months ago. I thought this morning of answering all their demands before I slept: but I have written so many sheets, and all full, that I find my eyes and my fingers both fail; and I believe this must close my intercourse with Dublin this day. When I shall be able to complete my purpose, I do not know. To form friendships with good men is pleasant; but to maintain *all that communion*, which friendship expects, is in some cases very difficult. Happy should I be, could I meet my Irish friends in person, instead of sitting in solitude, and maintaining, by the tedious medium of the pen, this distant intercourse. But ‘The Lord, he shall choose our inheritance for us.’ Were all the planets of our system embodied, and placed in close association, the light would be greater, and the object grander; but then, usefulness and systematic beauty consist in their dispersion: and what are we, my brother, but so many satellites to Jesus, the great Sun of the Christian system? Some, indeed, like burning Mercuries,* keep nearer the luminary, and receive

* The planet Mercury is nearest the Sun.

more of its light and heat, whilst others preserve a greater distance, and reflect a greater portion of his light: yet if, amidst all this diversity, *they belong to the system*, two things may be affirmed of all:—all keep true to one centre, and borrow whatever light they have from one source. True it is, that the further they are from the sun, the longer are they in performing their revolutions: and is not this exemplified in us? The closer we keep to Jesus, the more brilliant are our graces, the more cheerful and active are our lives; but alas we are all comets; we all move in eccentric orbits: at one time glowing beneath the ray divine, at another freezing and congealing the icicles. ‘Oh what a miracle to man is man!’

“Little did I think when I began this letter, that I should have thus indulged myself in allegory; but true friendship, I believe, always dictates extempore; and my friends must never expect from me a studied epistle. They can meet with better thoughts, than I can furnish them with, in any bookseller’s shop. It is not the dish, however well it may be cooked, that gives the relish, but the sweet sauce of friendship; and this I think sometimes makes even nonsense palatable.

“But I have some questions to put to you;—first, how are all my college friends, Messrs. Walker, Maturin, Hamilton, &c.? How is

their health? But chiefly, how are the interests of religion among you? Are any praying students added to your number? Do all those you thought well of, continue to justify their profession? You know what it is that interests me. Pray tell me all, whether it makes me weep, or rejoice.

“I hope Mr. H—’s ministry was blessed in Dublin. Do you know any instances of it? *We must sow in hope, and I trust that we shall all gather fruit to eternal life, even where the buddings have never appeared to us in this world.** How is it with your own soul? I thank God I never, I think, rejoiced habitually so much in him as I have done of late. ‘*God is love.*’ That makes me happy. I rejoice that God reigns; that he reigns over all; that he reigns over me; over my crosses, my comforts, my family, my friends, my senses, my mental powers, my designs, my words, my preaching, my conduct; that he is *God over all* blessed for ever. I am willing to live, yet I long to die, to be freed from all error and all sin. I have nothing else to trouble me; no other cross to carry. The sun shines without, all day long; but I am sensible of internal darkness. Well, through grace it shall be all light by and by. Yes, you and

* A sentiment ever to be cherished by Sunday School teachers and parents.

I shall be angels of light, all Mercuries then; all near the sun; always in motion; always glowing with zeal and flaming with love. Oh for the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness!

“Will you tell brother M—— that I wait an opportunity to send a parcel to him? In that I will enclose a letter. My very affectionate respects to him, and Mr. H——, with all my college friends as though named. If you be not weary of such an eccentric correspondent, pray do not be long ere you write to your unworthy, but affectionate brother in Christ. S. P.”

To the above may be added, a few extracts of letters, which he addressed to his friends in 1797, and 1798.

TO DR. RYLAND.

March, 1797.

“During the last three weeks, I have, at times, been very poorly, in colds, &c. Am better now, and have been all along assisted in going through my public duties. Let us continue to pray for each other, till death makes it a needless service. How uncertain is life, and what a blessing is death to a saint! I seemed lately to feel a kind of *affection* for death. Methinks if it were visible, I could embrace it. ‘Welcome herald, that bids the

prisoner be free; that announces the dawn of everlasting day; that bids the redeemed come to Zion with everlasting joy, to be beyond the reach of an erroneous judgment, and a depraved heart. To believe, to feel, to speak, to act *exactly* as God will have me; to be wholly absorbed and taken up with him; this, this, nothing short of this, can make my bliss complete. But *all this is mine*. Oh the height, the depth, the length, the breadth of Redeeming love! It conquers my heart, and constrains me to yield myself a living sacrifice, acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ.

“My dear brother, we have had many happy meetings upon earth: the best is in reserve.

‘ No heart upon earth can conceive
The bliss that in heaven they share;
Then, who this dark world would not leave,
And cheerfully die to be there!’

“Oh how full of love, and joy, and praise, shall we be when that happy state is ours! Well, yet a little while, and He that shall come, will come. Even so come, Lord Jesus! —My dear brother, forgive the hasty effusions of a heart that loves you in the bowels of Jesus, and is always happy in testifying itself to be

Affectionately yours, S. P.”

TO MR. CAVE,

On the falling away of some who had promised fair in religion.

—————1797.

“I thank you, my dear brother, for the confidence you repose in me, the affection you have for me, and the freedom with which you write to me. Assure yourself that I sincerely sympathize in the cutting events which you have lately experienced. Trying indeed! Your heart must bleed. Yet be not discouraged in your work. The more *Satan* opposes *Christ*, the more let *us* oppose *him*. He comes with great violence because his time is short. His kingdom is on the decline; his strong holds are besieged, and he knows they must soon be taken. Whilst it lasts, he is making desperate sallies on the armies of the Lamb. It is no great wonder that he fights and wounds a raw recruit now and then, who strays from the camp, and thoughtless of the danger, keeps not close by the Captain's tent. I hope our glorious Leader will heal the wounded, and secure the captive. He is sure to make reprisals. Christ will have ten to one. You will yet see his arm made brave. He shall go forth like a man of war. The prisoners shall be redeemed, and the old tyrant shall be cast into the bottomless pit. Be of good cheer, my fellow soldier. The cause is not ours, but God's. Let us endure hard-

ness, and still fight the good fight of faith. At last we shall come off conquerors, through Him who hath loved us.

“I hope you have some causes for joy, as well as grief. I trust though one, or two, or three fall, the tens, and the twenties stand their ground. Oh do what you can to cheer them under the common trial. Let them not see a faint heart in *you*. Fight manfully still. Tell them to watch the more; to pray the harder; to walk the closer with God. So out of the eater shall come forth meat, and sweetness out of the strong. S. P.”

TO MR. BATES AND MRS. BARNES,

Who had been burnt out of their residence.

“The many expressions of christian friendship which I received from you, and your affectionate families, during my last visit to London, will often excite grateful recollection in future, as they have almost daily since I parted from you; and though I do not write this avowedly as a mere letter of acknowledgment, yet I wish to assure you, that I am not forgetful of my friends, nor unthankful for their kindness. May all the favour you show to the servants of our common Lord for his sake, be amply recompensed in present peace, and future felicity, when the promise of Him who cannot lie, shall be fulfilled.—

‘A cup of cold water given to a disciple, in the name of a disciple, shall not lose its reward.’

“But, whilst you, my dear friends, live ‘in hope of the glory’ that remains ‘to be revealed,’ I am persuaded that you expect *all* as the fruit of sovereign mercy, which first forms us to the mind of Christ, then accepts, and then rewards. Truly, if sinners be rewarded, it must be, ‘of grace, and not of debt.’ Yet it is a mercy of unspeakable magnitude, that grace should establish a connexion, between obedience and enjoyment; such a connexion, as at once insures joy to the believer, and glory to Christ.

“Oh that our thoughts, our affections, our desires may be much in heaven! *Here*, you have been taught, is ‘no continuing city,’ no certain place of abode; and though you have been taught it awfully in flames, yet if you learn it effectually, the terror of the means will be conquered by the excellency and glory of the consequences. Yes, my friends, ‘in heaven we have a better and enduring substance:’ the apartments there are more spacious; the society more sweet; the enjoyments more perfect; and all to last for ever. Well may christians ‘rejoice in hope of the glory of God!’

S. P.”

TO DR. RYLAND:

November 17, 1797.

“I feel much for you in relation both to the duties and trials of your present situation: at the same time I bless God who fixed you in it, because I am persuaded that it will be for his glory in the churches of Christ. And though none but those, whose hands are full of religious concerns, can guess at your difficulties; yet our blessed Redeemer knows them all. Oh, my brother, you are travailing for Him, who redeemed you by his blood; who sympathizes with you, and who will graciously crown you at last. Small as my trials are, I would turn smith, and work at the anvil and the forge, rather than bear them for any other master than *Christ*. Yet were they ten thousand times as many as they are, the thought of their being for him, I trust, would sweeten them all.

“I have reason to be very thankful for much pleasure of late, both as a christian and a minister. I have never felt so deeply my need of a Divine Redeemer, and seldom possessed such solid confidence that he is mine. I want more and more to become a little child, to dwindle into nothing in my own esteem, to renounce my own wisdom, power and goodness, and simply look to, and live upon Jesus for all. I am ashamed that I have so much pride, so much self-will. Oh my Saviour!

make me ‘meek and lowly in heart;’ in this alone I find ‘rest to my soul.’

“I could say much of what Immanuel has done for my soul; but I fear lest even this should savour of vanity. When shall I be like my Lord! Oh welcome death, when I have nothing more to do for Christ! To him, till then, may I live every day and every hour! Rather may I be annihilated than not live to him!

“You will rejoice with me to hear that we have a pleasing prospect as a church. Several very hopeful, and some very valuable characters are about to join us. Lord, carry on thy work!
S. P.’

TO MRS. PEARCE,

On the dangerous illness of one of the children.

Portsmouth, January 29, 1798.

“Ignorant of the circumstances of our dear child, how shall I address myself to her dearer mother! With a fluttering heart, and a trembling hand, I, in this uncertainty, resume my pen. One consideration tranquillizes my mind,—I and mine are in the hands of *God*: the wise, the good, the indulgent Parent of mankind! Whatever *he* does is best. I am prepared for all his will, and hope that I shall never have a feeling, whose language is not, ‘Thy will be done.’

“ I am most kindly entertained here by Mr. and Mrs. Shoveller: and, except my dear Sarah’s presence, feel myself at home. *They* have had greater trials than *we* can at present know. They have attended *seven* children to the gloomy tomb: they have been supported beneath their loss, by Him who hath said, ‘As thy days, so shall thy strength be.’ Mrs. S. tells me, she ‘blessed God for all.’ May my dear Sarah be enabled to do the same, whatever the result may prove. To-morrow I expect another letter from you; yet lest you should too much feel my absence, I will not delay forwarding this a single post. O that it may prove in some degree a messenger of consolation!

“ Yesterday I preached three times; God was very good. I received your letter before the first service: you may be assured that I bore you on my heart in the presence of my Lord and yours; nor shall I pray in vain. He will either restore the child, or support you under the loss of it. I dare not pray with importunity for any *earthly good*; for ‘who knoweth what is good for man in this life, all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow?’ But *strength* to bear the loss of earthly comforts, he has *promised*: for *that* I importune; and *that*, I doubt not, will be granted.

“ In a house directly opposite to the win-

dow before which I now write, a *wife*, a *mother*, is just departed. Why am I not a bereaved husband? Why not my children motherless? When we compare our condition with our wishes, we often complain: but if we compare it with that of many around us, our complaints would be exchanged for gratitude and praise. S. P."

"THE GARDENER AND ROSE TREE."

"A FABLE."

"Affectionately addressed to Mrs. J. H.—, on the death of her child, by her truly sympathizing friend, S. P."

March 12, 1798.

"In a sweet spot, which Wisdom chose,
Grew an unique and lovely Rose;
A flow'r so fair was seldom borne—
A Rose almost without a thorn.
Each passing stranger stopp'd to view
A plant possessing charms so new:
"*Sweet Flow'r!*" each lip was heard to say—
Nor less the Owner pleased than they;
Reared by his hand with constant care,
And planted in his choice parterre,
Of all his garden this the pride,
No flow'r so much admir'd beside.

Nor did the Rose unconscious bloom,
Nor feel ungrateful for the boon;
Oft as her guardian came that way,
Whether at dawn or eve of day,
Expanded wide—her form unveil'd,
She *double fragrance* then exhal'd.

As months rolled on, the spring appear'd,
Its genial rays the Rose matur'd;

Forth from its root a *shoot* extends—
 The parent Rose-tree downward bends,
 And, with a joy unknown before,
 Contemplates the yet embryo flow'r.

‘ Offspring most dear (she fondly said,)
 ‘ Part of myself! beneath my shade,
 ‘ Safe shalt thou rise, whilst happy I,
 ‘ Transported with maternal joy,
 ‘ Shall see thy little buds appear,
 ‘ Unfold and bloom in beauty here.
 ‘ What though the Lily, or Jonquil,
 ‘ Or Hyacinth no longer fill
 ‘ The space around me—all shall be
 ‘ Abundantly made up in thee.

‘ What though my present charms decay,
 ‘ And passing strangers no more say
 ‘ Of *me*, ‘ Sweet flower!’—Yet *thou* shalt raise
 ‘ Thy blooming head, and gain the praise;
 ‘ And this reverberated pleasure
 ‘ Shall be to me a world of treasure.
 ‘ Cheerful I part with former merit,
 ‘ That it my darling may inherit.
 ‘ Haste then the hours which bid thee bloom,
 ‘ And fill the zephyrs with perfume!’

Thus had the Rose-tree scarcely spoken,
 Ere the sweet cup of bliss was broken—
 The Gard’ner came, and with one stroke
 He from the root the offspring took;
 Took from the soil wherein it grew,
 And hid it from the parent’s view.

Judge ye who know a mother’s cares
 For the dear tender babe she bears,
 The parent’s anguish—ye alone
 Such sad vicissitudes have known.

Deep was the wound; nor slight the pain
 Which made the Rose-tree thus complain;—

‘ Dear little darling ! art thou gone—
‘ Thy charms scarce to thy mother known !
‘ Remov’d so soon !—So suddenly,
‘ Snatch’d from my fond maternal eye !
‘ What hast thou done?—dear offspring ! say,
‘ So *early* to be snatch’d away !
‘ What ! gone for *ever* !—seen no more !
‘ For ever I thy loss deplore.
‘ Ye dews descend, with tears supply
‘ My now for ever tearful eye ;
‘ Or rather come some northern blast,
‘ Dislodge my yielding roots in haste.
‘ Whirlwinds arise—my branches tear,
‘ And to some distant regions bear
‘ Far from this spot, a wretched mother,
‘ Whose fruit and joys are gone together.”

As thus the anguish’d Rose-tree cry’d,
Her owner near her she espy’d ;
Who in these gentle terms reprov’d
A plant, though murm’ring, still belov’d :—

‘ Cease, beauteous flow’r, these useless cries,
‘ And let my lessons make thee wise.
‘ Art thou not mine ? Did not my hand
‘ Transplant thee from the barren sand,
‘ Where once a mean unsightly plant,
‘ Expos’d to injury and want,
‘ Unknown, and unadmir’d, I found,
‘ And brought thee to this fertile ground ;
‘ With studious art improv’d thy form,
‘ Secur’d thee from the inclement storm,
‘ And through the seasons of the year,
‘ Made thee my unabating care ?
‘ Hast thou not blest thy happy lot,
‘ In such an owner—such a spot ?
‘ But now, because thy shoot I’ve taken,
‘ Thy best of friends must be forsaken.

‘ Know, flow’r belov’d, e’en this affliction
‘ Shall prove to thee a benediction :
‘ Had I not the young plant remov’d,
‘ (So fondly by thy heart belov’d)
‘ Of me thy heart would scarce have thought,
‘ With gratitude no more be fraught :
‘ —Yea—thy own beauty be at stake
‘ Surrender’d for thy offspring’s sake.
‘ Nor think, that, hidden from thine eyes,
‘ The infant plant neglected lies—
‘ No—I’ve another garden, where
‘ In richer soil and purer air
‘ It’s now transplanted, there to shine,
‘ In beauties fairer far than thine.

‘ Nor shalt thou always be apart
‘ From the dear darling of thy heart ;
‘ For ’tis my purpose thee to bear
‘ In future time, and plant thee there,
‘ Where thy now absent offset grows,
‘ And blossoms a CELESTIAL Rose.
‘ Be patient, then, till that set hour shall come,
‘ When thou and thine shall in new beauties bloom.
‘ No more its absence shalt thou then deplore,
‘ Together grow, and ne’er be parted more.’

These words to silence hush’d the plaintive Rose,
With deeper blushes redd’ning now she glows,
Submissive bow’d her unrepining head,
Again her wonted, grateful fragrance shed—
Cry’d, ‘ Thou hast taken only what’s thine own,
‘ Therefore, thy will, my Lord, not mine, be done.’ ”

CHAPTER IV.

An Account of his last Affliction, and the holy and happy Exercises of his Mind under it.

EARLY in October, 1798, Mr. Pearce attended at the Kettering ministers' meeting, and preached from Psalm xc. 16, 17. "Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it." He was observed to be singularly solemn and affectionate in that discourse. If he had known it to be the last time that he should address his brethren in that part of the country, he could scarcely have felt or spoken in a more interesting manner. It was a discourse full of instruction, full of a holy unction, and that seemed to breathe an apostolical ardour. On his return, he preached at Market Harborough; and riding home the next day in company with his friend, Mr. Summers, of London, they were overtaken with rain. Mr. Pearce was wet through his clothes, and towards evening complained of a chillness. A slight hoarseness followed. He preached several times after this, which brought on an inflammation, and issued in a consumption. It is

probable that if his constitution had not been previously impaired, such effects might not have followed in this instance. His own ideas on this subject, are expressed in a letter to Dr. Ryland, dated December 4, 1798, and in another to Mr. King, dated from Bristol, on his way to Plymouth, March 30, 1799. In the former, he says: "Ever since my Christmas journey last year to Sheepshead, Nottingham, and Leicester, on the mission business, I have found my constitution greatly debilitated, in consequence of a cold caught after the unusual exertions which circumstances then demanded; so that from a frame that could endure any weather, I have since been too tender to encounter a single shower without danger; and the duties of the Lord's day, which as far as bodily strength went, I could perform with little fatigue, have since frequently overcome me. But the severe cold I caught in my return from the last Kettering ministers' meeting, has affected me so much, that I have sometimes concluded I must give up preaching entirely; for though my head and spirits are better than for two years past, yet my stomach is so very weak, that I cannot pray in my family without frequent pauses for breath; and in the pulpit it is labour and agony, which must be felt to be conceived of. I have, however, made shift to preach sometimes thrice, but mostly only twice on a

Lord's-day, till the last, when the morning sermon only, though I delivered it with great pleasure of mind, and with as much caution as to my voice as possible, yet cost me so much labour as threw me into a fever till the next day, and prevented my sleeping all night." In the letter he writes thus: "Should my life be spared, I and my family, and all my connexions will stand indebted, under God, to you. Unsuspecting of danger myself, I believe I should have gone on with my exertions, till the grave had received me. Your attention sent Mr. B. (the apothecary) to me, and then first I learned what I have since been increasingly convinced of—*that I was rapidly destroying the vital principle.* And the kind interest you have taken in my welfare ever since, has often drawn the grateful tear from my eye. May the God of heaven and earth reward your kindness to his unworthy servant, and save you from all the evils from which your distinguished friendship would have saved me."

Such were his ideas. His labours were certainly abundant; perhaps too great for his constitution: but it is probable that nothing was more injurious to his health, than a frequent exposure to night air, and an inattention to the necessity of changing damp clothes.

Hitherto we have seen in Mr. Pearce, the active, assiduous, and laborious servant of

Jesus Christ; but now we see him laid aside from his work, wasting away by slow degrees, patiently enduring the will of God, and cheerfully waiting for his dissolution. And as here is but little to narrate, I shall content myself with copying his letters, or extracts from them, to his friends, in the order of time in which they were written, only now and then dropping a few hints to furnish the reader with the occasions of some of them.

TO DR. RYLAND.

Birmingham, October 8, 1798.

“Oh! my dear brother, your letter of the 5th which I received this morning, has made me thankful for all my pulpit agonies, as they enable me to weep with a weeping brother. They have been of use to me in other respects; particularly, in teaching me the importance of attaining and maintaining that spirituality and pious ardour, in which I have found the most effectual relief; so that, on the whole, I must try to ‘glory in tribulations also.’ I trust I often can when the conflict is past; but to glory ‘in’ them, especially in mental distress—this is the difficulty, this is the task.

“But how often has it been found, that when ministers have felt themselves most embarrassed, the most effectual good has been done to the people. Oh for hearts entirely resigned to the will of God.

“How happy should I be, could I always enjoy the sympathies of a brother, who is tried in these points, as I of late have been. S. P.”

TO MR. FULLER.

Birmingham, October 29, 1778.

“I caught a violent cold in returning from our last Committee meeting, from which I have not yet recovered. A little thing now affects my constitution, which I once judged would be weather and labour proof for at least thirty years, if I lived so long. I thank God that I am not debilitated by iniquity. I have lately met with an occurrence, which occasioned me much pain and perplexity. * * * * * Trials soften our hearts, and make us more fully prize the dear few, into whose faithful sympathizing bosoms we can with confidence pour our sorrows. I think I should bless God for my afflictions, if they produced no other fruits than these,—the tenderness they inspire, and the friendships they enjoy. Pray, my dear brother, for yours affectionately, S. P.”

To a young man who had applied to him for advice, how he should best improve his time, previous to his going to the Bristol Academy.

Birmingham, November 13, 1793.

“My dear M——,

“—If instead of an opinion respecting the best way of occupying your time before you go, you will accept a little counsel during

your continuance there, I shall be happy at any time to contribute such a mite as my experience and observation have put in my power.

“ At present, the following rules appear of so much moment, that were I to resume a place in any literary establishment, I would religiously adopt them as the standard of my conduct:—First, *I would cultivate a spirit of habitual devotion.* Warm piety connected with my studies, and especially at my entrance upon them, would not only assist me in forming a judgment on their respective importance, and secure the blessing of God upon them; but would so cement the religious feeling with the literary pursuit, as might abide with me for life. The habit of uniting these, being once formed, would, I hope, be never lost; and I am sure that without this, I shall both pursue trivial and unworthy objects, and those that are worthy I shall pursue for a wrong end.—Secondly, *I would determine on a uniform submission to the instructions of my preceptor, and study those things which would give him pleasure.* If he be not wiser than I am, for what purpose do I come under his care? I accepted the pecuniary help of the society on condition of conformity to its will; and it is the Society’s will that my tutor should govern me. My example will have influence; let me not, by a single act of dis-

obedience, or by a word that implicates dissatisfaction, sow the seeds of discord in the bosoms of my companions.—Thirdly, *I would pray and strive for the power of self-government, to form no plan, to utter not a word, to take no step under the mere influence of passion.* Let my judgment be often asked, and let me always give it time to answer. Let me always guard against a light or trifling spirit; and particularly as I shall be amongst a number of youths, whose years will incline them all to the same frailty.—Fourthly, *I would in all my weekly and daily pursuits observe the strictest order.* Always let me act by a plan. Let every hour have its proper pursuit; from which let nothing but a settled conviction that I can employ it to better advantage, ever cause me to deviate. Let me have fixed time for prayer, meditation, reading, languages, correspondence, recreation, sleep, &c.—Fifthly, *I would not only assign to every hour its proper pursuit, but what I did, I would try to do it with all my might.* The hours at such a place are precious beyond conception, till the student enters on life's busy scenes. Let me set the best of my class ever before me, and strive to be better than they. In humility and diligence, let me aim to be the first.—Sixthly, *I would particularly avoid a versatile habit.* Without this, I may be a gaudy butterfly, but never, like the bee, will my hive

bear examining. Whatever I take in hand, let me first be sure I understand it, then duly consider it, and if it be good, let me adopt and use it.

“To these, my dear brother, let me add three or four things more minute, but which I am persuaded will help you much—*Guard against a large acquaintance while you are a student.* Bristol friendship, while you sustain that character, will prove a vile thief, and rob you of many an invaluable hour.—*Get two or three of the students, whose piety you most approve, to meet for one hour in a week for experimental conversation, and mutual prayer.* I found this highly beneficial, though strange to tell, by some we were persecuted for our practice!—*Keep a diary.* Once a week, at farthest, call yourself to an account: What advances you have made in your studies; in divinity, history, languages, natural philosophy, style, arrangement; and amidst all, do not forget to inquire—Am I more fit to *serve* and to *enjoy* God than I was last week?

S. P.”

“On December 2, 1798, he delivered his last sermon. The subject was taken from Dan. x. 19. ‘Oh man, greatly beloved, fear not, peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my Lord speak;

for thou hast strengthened me.'——'Amongst all the Old Testament saints,' said he, in his introduction to that discourse, 'there is not one whose virtues were more, and whose imperfections were fewer, than those of Daniel. By the history given of him in this book, which yet seems not to be complete, he appears to have excelled among the excellent.' Doubtless no one was farther from his thoughts than himself; several of his friends, however, could not help applying it to him, and that with a painful apprehension of what followed soon after.

TO MR. CAVE, LEICESTER.

Birmingham, December 4, 1798.

“——Blessed be God, my mind is calm; and though my body be weakness itself, my spirits are good, and I can write as well as ever, though I can hardly speak two sentences without a pause. All is well, brother! all is well, for time and eternity. My soul rejoices in the everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure. Peace from our dear Lord Jesus be with your spirit, as it is (yea, more also) with your affectionate brother, S. P.”

Birmingham, Dec. 10, 1798.

“I am now quite laid by from preaching, and am so reduced in my internal strength, that I can hardly converse with a friend for

five minutes without losing my breath. Indeed I have been so ill, that I thought the next ascent would be, not to a pulpit, but to a throne—to the throne of glory. Yes, indeed, my friend, the religion of Jesus will support when flesh and heart fail: and in my worst state of body, my soul was filled with joy. I am now getting a little better, though but very slowly. But fast or slow, or as it may, the Lord doth all things well. S. P.”

“——I have overdone myself in preaching. I am now ordered to lie by, and not even to *converse* without great care; nor indeed, till to-day, have I for some time been able to utter a sentence, without a painful effort. Blessed be God! I have been filled all through my affliction with peace and joy in believing; and at one time, when I thought I was entering the valley of death, the prospect beyond was so full of glory, that but for the sorrow it would have occasioned to some who would be left behind, I should have longed that moment to have mounted to the skies. Oh, my friend, what a mercy that I am not receiving the wages of sin; that my health has not been impaired by vice; but that, on the contrary, I am *bearing in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus*. To him be all the praise! Truly I have proved that God is faithful: and most cheerfully would I take double the affliction

for one half of the joy and sweetness which have attended it. Accept a sermon which is this day published.* S. P.”

TO MR. BATES AND MRS. BARNES, MINORIES.

Birmingham, Dec. 14, 1798.

“——I could tell you much of the Lord’s goodness during my affliction. Truly ‘his right hand hath been under my head, and his left embraced me.’ And when I was at the worst, especially, and expected ere long to have done with time, even *then*, such holy joy, such ineffable sweetness filled my soul, that I would not have exchanged that situation for any besides heaven itself.

“Oh, my dear friends, let us live to *Christ*, and lay ourselves wholly out for him whilst we live; and then, when health and life forsake us, he will be the strength of our heart, and our portion for ever. S. P.”

About this time, the congregation at Cannon-street was supplied for several months by MR. WARD, who is since gone as a missionary to India: here that amiable man became intimately acquainted with Mr. Pearce, and conceived a most affectionate esteem for him. In

* The last but one he ever preached, entitled *MOTIVES TO GRATITUDE*. It was delivered on the day of national thanksgiving, and printed at the request of his own congregation.

a letter to a friend, dated January 5, 1799, he writes as follows:—

“ I am happy in the company of dear brother Pearce. I have seen more of God in him, than in any other person I ever knew. Oh how happy should I be to live and die with him! When well, he preaches three times on a Lord’s day, and two or three times in the week besides. He instructs the young people in the principles of religion, natural philosophy, astronomy, &c. They have a Benevolent Society, from the funds of which they distribute forty or fifty pounds a year (177 to 222 dollars) to the poor of the congregation. They have a Sick Society for visiting the afflicted in general: a Book Society at chapel: a *Lord’s-day School*, at which betwixt two and three hundred children are instructed. Add to this, missionary business, visiting the people, an extensive correspondence, two volumes of mission history preparing for the press, &c., and then you will see something of the soul of Pearce. He is every where venerated, though but a young man; and all the kind, tender, gentle affections, make him as a little child at the feet of his Saviour.

W. W.”

In February, he rode to the opening of a Baptist meeting-house at Bedworth; but did

not engage in any of the services. Here several of his brethren saw him for the last time. Soon afterwards, writing to the compiler of these Memoirs, he says,—“The Lord’s-day after I came home, I tried to speak a little after sermon. It inflamed my lungs afresh, and produced phlegm, coughing, and spitting of blood. Perhaps I may never preach more. Well, the Lord’s will be done. I thank him that ever he took me into his service; and now, if he see fit to give me a discharge, I submit.”

During the above meeting, a word was dropped by one of his brethren which he took as a reflection, though nothing was farther from the intention of the speaker. It wrought upon his mind, and in a few days after, he wrote as follows:—“Do you remember what passed at B.? Had I not been accustomed to receive *plain, friendly* remarks from you, I should have thought that you meant to insinuate a reproof. If you did, tell me plainly. If you did not, it is all at an end. You will not take my naming it unkind, although I should be mistaken, since affectionate explanations are necessary, when suspicions arise, to the preservation of friendship; and I need not say that I hold the preservation of your friendship in no small account.”

The above is copied, not only to set forth the spirit and conduct of Mr. Pearce in a case

wherein he felt himself aggrieved, but to show in how easy and amiable a manner thousands of mistakes might be rectified, and differences prevented, by a frank and timely explanation.

TO MR. FULLER.

March 23, 1799.

He was now setting out for Plymouth; and after observing the great danger he was supposed to be in, with respect to a consumption, he adds:—"But thanks be to God, who giveth my heart the victory, let my poor body be consumed, or preserved. In the thought of *leaving*, I feel a momentary gloom; but in the thought of *going*, a heavenly triumph.

'Oh to grace how great a debtor!'

"Praise God with me, and for me, my dear brother, and let us not mind dying any more than sleeping. No, no! let every Christian sing the loudest, as he gets the nearest to the presence of his God. Eternally yours in Him, who hath washed us both in his blood. S. P."

TO MR. MEDLEY, LONDON.

Under the same date, he says,—“My affliction has been rendered sweet, by the supports and smiles of Him whom I have served in the gospel of his Son. He hath delivered, he doth deliver, and I trust that he will yet

deliver. Living or dying, all is well for ever. Oh what shall I render to the Lord!"

It seems, that in order to avoid wounding Mrs. Pearce's feelings, he deferred the settlement of his affairs till he arrived at Bristol; from whence he wrote to his friend, Mr. King, requesting him to become an executor. Receiving a favourable answer, he replied as follows:—

Bristol, April 6, 1799.

“Your letter, just received, affected me too much, with feelings both of sympathy and gratitude, to remain unanswered a single post. Most heartily do I thank you for accepting a service, which friendship alone can render agreeable in the most simple cases. Should that service demand your activities at an early period, may no unforeseen occurrence increase the necessary care! But may the Father of the fatherless, and Judge of the widows, send you a recompense into your own bosom, equal to all that friendship, to which, under God, I have been so much indebted in life, and reposing on whose bosom, even death itself loses part of its gloom. In you, my children will find another father—in you, my wife another husband. Your tenderness will sympathize with the one, under the most distressing sensibilities; and your

prudent counsels be a guide to the others, through the unknown mazes of inexperienced youth. Enough—blessed God! My soul prostrates, and adores thee for such a friend.
S. P.”

TO MR. FULLER.

Plymouth, April 18, 1799.

“The last time that I wrote to you was at the close of a letter sent to you by brother Ryland. I did not like that postscript form; it looked so card-like as to make me fear that you would deem it unbrotherly. After all, perhaps you thought nothing about it; and my anxieties might arise only from my weakness, which seems to be constantly increasing my sensibilities. If ever I felt love in its tenderness for my friends, it has been since my affliction. This, in great measure, is no more than the love of ‘publicans and harlots, who love those that love them.’ I never conceived myself by a hundred degrees so interested in the regards of my friends, as this season of affliction has manifested I was; and therefore, so far from claiming any ‘reward’ for loving them in return, I should account myself a monster of ingratitude, were it otherwise. Yet there is something in affliction itself, which, by increasing the delicacy of our feelings, and detaching our thoughts from the usual round of objects which present them-

selves to the mind when in a state of health, may be easily conceived to make us susceptible of stronger, and more permanent impressions of an affectionate nature.

“I heard at Bristol, that you and your friends had remembered me in your prayers, at Kettering. Whether the Lord whom we serve may see fit to answer your petitions on my account or not, may they at least be returned into your own bosoms.

“For the sake of others, I should be happy could I assure you that my health was improving. As to myself, I thank God that I am not without a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better. I find that neither in sickness, nor in health, I can be so much as I wish like him whom I love. ‘To die is gain:’ Oh to gain that state, those feelings, that character, which perfectly accord with the mind of Christ, and are attended with the full persuasion of his complete and everlasting approbation! I want no heaven but this; and to gain this, most gladly would I this moment expire. But if to abide in the flesh be more needful for an individual of my fellow-men,—Lord, let thy will be done; only let Christ be magnified by me, whether in life or death.

“The weather has been so wet and windy since I have been at Plymouth, that I could not reasonably expect to be much better; and

I cannot say that I am much worse. All the future is uncertain. Professional men encourage me; but frequent returns appear, and occasional discharges of blood check my expectations. If I speak but for two minutes, my breast feels as sore as though it were scraped with a rough-edged razor; so that I am mute all the day long, and have actually learned to converse with my sister by means of our fingers.

“I thank you for yours of April 4th, which I did not receive till the 12th, the day that I arrived at Plymouth. On the 16th, a copy of yours to brother Ryland came to hand, to which I should have replied yesterday, but had not leisure. I am happy and thankful for your success. May the Lord himself pilot the *Criterion* safely to Calcutta river!

“Unless the Lord work a miracle for me, I am sure that I shall not be able to attend the Olney meeting. It is to my feelings a severe anticipation; but how can I be a Christian, and not submit to God? S. P.”

TO MR. W. WARD.

Plymouth, April 22, 1799.

“Most affectionately do I thank you for your letter, so full of information, and of friendship. To our common Friend, who is gone into heaven, where he ever sitteth at the right hand of God for us, I commend you.

Whether I die, or live, God will take care of you till he has ripened you for the common salvation. Then shall I meet my dear brother Ward again; and who can tell how much more interesting our intercourse in heaven will be made by the scenes that most distress our poor spirits here. Oh, had I none to live for, I had rather die than live, that I may be at once like Him whom I love. But while he insures me grace—why should I regret the delay of glory? No: I will wait his will, who performeth all things for me.

“My dear brother, had I strength, I should rejoice to acquaint you with the wrestlings and the victories, the hopes and the fears, the pleasures and the pangs, which I have lately experienced. But I must forbear. All I can now say is, that God hath done me much good by all, and made me very thankful for all he has done. Alas! I shall see you no more. I cannot be at Olney on the 7th of May. The journey would be my death; but the Lord whom you serve will be with you then, and for ever. My love to all the dear assembled saints, who will give you their benedictions at that solemn season.

“Ever yours, S. P.”

TO DR. RYLAND.

Plymouth, April 24, 1799.

“Very dear Brother,

“My health is in much the same state as when I wrote last, excepting that my muscular strength rather increases, and my powers of speaking seem less and less every week. I have, for the most part, spoken only in whispers for several days past; and even these seem too much for my irritable lungs. My father asked me a question to-day; he did not understand me when I whispered; so I was obliged to utter *one word*, and one word *only*, a little louder, and that brought on a soreness, which I expect to feel till bed-time.

“I am still looking out for fine weather: all here is cold and rainy. We have had but two or three fair and warm days since I have been here; then I felt better. I am perfectly at a loss even to guess what the Lord means to do with me; but I desire to commit my ways to him, and be at peace. I am going to-day about five miles into the country (to Tamer-ton,) where I shall await the will of God concerning me.

“I knew not of any Committee-meeting of our Society to be held respecting Mr. Marshman and his wife. I have therefore sent no vote, and indeed it is my happiness that I have full confidence in my brethren, at this important crisis, since close thinking or much

writing always increases my fever, and promotes my complaint.

“My dear brother, I hope you will correspond much with Kettering. I used to be a medium, but God has put me out of the way. I could weep that I can serve him no more: and yet I fear some would be tears of pride. Oh for perfect likeness to my humble Lord!
S. P.”

The reader has seen how much he regretted being absent from the solemn designations of the missionaries at Olney. He however addressed the following lines to Mr. Fuller, which were read at the close of that meeting, to the dissolving of nearly the whole assembly in tears:—

Tamerton, May 2, 1799.

“——Oh that the Lord, who is unconfined by place or condition, may copiously pour out upon you all the rich effusions of his Holy Spirit on the approaching day! My most hearty love to each missionary, who may then encircle the throne of grace. Happy men! happy women! you are going to be fellow-labourers with Christ himself! I congratulate—I almost envy you; yet I love you, and can scarcely now forbear dropping a tear of love as each of your names passes across my mind. Oh what promises are yours; and what

reward! Surely heaven is filled with double joy, and resounds with unusual acclamations at the arrival of each missionary there. Oh be faithful, my dear brethren, my dear sisters, be faithful unto death, and all this joy is yours! Long as I live, my imagination will be hovering over you in Bengal; and should I die, if separate spirits be allowed a visit to the world they have left, methinks mine would soon be at Mudnabatty, watching your labours, your conflicts, and your pleasures, whilst you are always abounding in the work of the Lord.

S. P."

TO DR. RYLAND.

" My dear Brother, *Plymouth, May 14, 1799.*

" Yours of the 11th instant I have just received, and thank you for your continued concern for your poor unworthy brother.

" I have suffered much in my health since I wrote to you last, by the increase of my feverish complaint, which filled me with heat and horror all night, and in the day sometimes almost suffocated me with the violence of its paroxysms. I am extremely weak, and now, that warm weather which I came into Devon to seek, I dread as much as the cold, because it excites the fever. I am happy, however, in the Lord. I have not a wish to live or die, but as he pleases. I truly enjoy the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and would not be with-

out his divine atonement, wherein to rest my soul, for ten thousand worlds. I feel quite weaned from earth, and all things in it. Death hath lost his sting, the grave its horrors; and the attractions of heaven, I had almost said, are sometimes violent.

‘Oh to grace how great a debtor!’

“But I am wearied. May all grace abound towards my dear brother, and his affectionate
S. P.”

TO THE CHURCH IN CANNON-STREET.

Plymouth; May 31, 1799.

“To the dear people of my charge, the flock of Christ, assembling in Cannon-street, Birmingham—their afflicted but affectionate Pastor presents his love in Christ Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep.

“My dearest, dearest Friends and Brethren,

“Separated as I have been a long time from you, and during that time of separation, having suffered much both in body and mind, yet my heart has still been with you, participating in your sorrows, uniting in your prayers, and rejoicing with you in the hope of that glory, to which divine faithfulness has engaged to bring us, and for which our heavenly Father, by all his providences, and by every operation of his Holy Spirit, is daily preparing us.

“Never, my dear brethren, did I so much

rejoice in our being made ‘partakers of the heavenly calling,’ as during my late afflictions. The sweet thoughts of glory, where I shall meet my dear Lord Jesus, with all his redeemed ones, perfectly freed from all that sin which now burdens us, and makes us groan from day to day,—this transports my soul, whilst out of weakness I am made strong, and at times am enabled to glory even in my bodily infirmities, that the power of Christ, in supporting when flesh and heart fail, may the more evidently rest upon me. Oh, my dear brethren and sisters! let me, as one alive almost from the dead, let me exhort you to stand fast in that blessed gospel, which for ten years I have now preached among you:—the gospel of the grace of God; the gospel of free, full, everlasting salvation, founded on the sufferings and death of God, *manifest in the flesh*. Look much at this all-amazing scene!

‘Behold! a God descends and dies,
To save my soul from gaping hell;’

And then say whether any poor broken-hearted sinner need be afraid to venture his hopes of salvation on such a sacrifice; especially, since He who is thus ‘mighty to save,’ hath said, that ‘whosoever cometh to him he will in no wise cast out.’ You, beloved, who have found the peace-speaking virtue of this blood

of atonement, must not be satisfied with what you have already known or enjoyed.—The only way to be constantly happy and constantly prepared for the most awful changes, which we must all experience, is to be constantly *looking* and *coming* to a dying Saviour; renouncing all our own worthiness; cleaving to the loving Jesus as our all in all; giving up every thing, however valuable to our worldly interests, that clashes with our fidelity to Christ; begging that of his fulness we may receive ‘grace upon grace,’ whilst our faith actually *relies* on his power and faithfulness, for the full accomplishment of every promise in his word that we plead with him, and guarding against every thing that might for a moment bring distance and darkness between your souls, and your precious Lord. If you *thus live*, (and oh that you may daily receive fresh life from Christ so to do!) ‘the peace of God will keep your hearts and minds,’ and you will be filled with ‘joy unspeakable and full of glory.’

“As a *Church*, you cannot conceive what pleasure I have enjoyed in hearing that you are in peace; that you attend prayer-meetings; that you seem to be stirred up of late for the honour and prosperity of religion. Go on in these good ways, my beloved friends, and assuredly the God of peace will be with you. Yea, if after all I should be taken entirely

from you, yet God will surely visit you, and never leave you, nor forsake you.

“As to my health, I seem on the whole to be still mending, though but very slowly. The fever troubles me often both by day and night; but my strength increases. I long to see your faces in the flesh; yea, when I thought myself near the gates of the grave, I wished, if it were the Lord’s will, to depart among those whom I so much loved. But I am in good hands, and all must be right.

“I thank both you and the congregation most affectionately, for all the kindness you have shown respecting me and my family, during my absence. The Lord return it a thousand fold! My love to every one, both old and young, rich and poor, as though named. The Lord bless to your edification the occasional ministry which you enjoy. I hope you regularly attend upon it, and keep together, as ‘the horses in Pharaoh’s chariot.’ I pray much for you: pray, still pray for your very affectionate, though unworthy, pastor.

S. P.”

In a postscript to Mr. King, he says, “I have made an effort to write this letter; my affections would take no denial; but it has brought on the fever.”

It seems to have been about this time that he wrote the following lines, which have ap-

peared in several periodical publications, but with many inaccuracies:—

HYMN IN A STORM.

“ In the floods of tribulation,
While the billows o’er me roll,
Jesus whispers consolation,
And supports my fainting soul :
Thus the lion yields me honey,
From the eater food is given;
Strengthen’d thus, I still press forward,
Singing as I wade to heaven,—
Sweet affliction ! sweet affliction,
That brings Jesus to my soul !

’Mid the gloom the vivid lightnings
With increased brightness play ;
’Mid the thornbrake, beauteous flow’rets
Look more beautiful and gay ;
So, in darkest dispensations,
Doth my faithful LORD appear,
With his richest consolations,
To re-animate and cheer.
Sweet affliction ! sweet affliction,
Thus to bring my Saviour near !

Floods of tribulation heighten,
Billows still around me roar ;
Those that know not CHRIST—ye frighten,
But my soul defies your pow’r.
In the sacred page recorded,
Thus his word securely stands,—
• Fear not, I’m in trouble near thee,
Nought shall pluck thee from my hands.
Sweet affliction ! sweet affliction,
That to such sweet words lay claim !

All I meet I find assists me
In my path to heav'nly joy,
Where, though trials now attend me,
Trials never more annoy :
Wearing there a weight of glory,
Still the path I'll ne'er forget ;
But, reflecting how it led me
To my blessed Saviour's seat,
Cry, ' Affliction ! sweet affliction !
Haste ! bring more to Jesus' feet ! ' "

Towards the latter end of May, when Mr. Ward, and his companions, were just ready to set sail, a consultation concerning Mr. Pearce was held on board the *Criterion*, in which all the missionaries, and some of the members of the Baptist Missionary Society were present. It was well known that he had for several years been engaged in preparing materials for a *History of Missions*, to be comprised in two volumes octavo: and as the sending of the gospel among the heathens had so deeply occupied his heart, considerable expectations had been formed by religious people, of his producing an interesting work on the subject. The question now was, could not this performance be finished by other hands, and the profits of it be appropriated to the benefit of Mr. Pearce's family? It was admitted by all, that this work would, partly from its own merits and partly from the great interest which the author justly

possessed in the public esteem, be very productive; and that it would be a delicate and proper method of enabling the religious public, by subscribing liberally to it, to afford substantial assistance to the family of this excellent man. The result was, that one of the members of the Society addressed a letter to Mr. Pearce's relations, at Plymouth, requesting them to consult him as he should be able to bear it, respecting the state of his manuscripts; and to inquire whether they were in a condition to admit of being finished by another hand; desiring them also to assure him, for his present relief concerning his dear family, that whatever the hand of friendship could effect on their behalf, should be accomplished. The answer, though it left no manner of hope as to the accomplishment of the object, yet is so expressive of the reigning dispositions of the writer's heart, as an affectionate husband, a tender father, a grateful friend, and a sincere Christian; that it cannot be uninteresting to the reader:—

Tamerton, June 24, 1799.

“To use the common introduction of ‘dear brother,’ would fall so far short of my feelings towards a friend, whose uniform conduct has ever laid so great a claim to my affection and gratitude; but whose recent kindness,—kindness in *adversity*,—kindness to my *wife*,—

kindness to my *children*—kindness that would go far to ‘smooth the bed of death,’ has overwhelmed my whole soul in tender thankfulness, and engaged my everlasting esteem. I know not how to begin.—‘Thought is poor, and poor expression.’ The *only* thing that lay heavy on my heart, when in the nearest prospect of eternity, was the future situation of my family. I had but a comparatively small portion to leave behind me, and yet that little was the *all* that an amiable woman, delicately brought up, and, through mercy, for the most part comfortably provided for since she entered on domestic life, —with five babes to feed, clothe, and educate, had to subsist on. Ah, what a prospect! Hard and long I strove to realize the promises made to the widows and the fatherless; but *these alone* I could not fully rest on and enjoy. For my own part, God was indeed very gracious. I was willing, I hope, to linger in suffering, if I might thereby most glorify him, and death was an angel whom I longed to come and embrace me, ‘cold’ as his embraces are. But how could I leave those who were dearest to my heart in the midst of a world, in which, although thousands now professed friendship for me, and, on my account, for mine; yet after my decease, would, with few exceptions, soon forget my widow and my children among the crowds of the needy and

distressed.—It was at this moment of painful sensibility that *your heart* meditated a plan to remove my anxieties;—a plan too that would involve much personal labour before it could be accomplished. ‘Blessed be God, who put it into thy heart, and blessed be thou.’ May the blessing of the widow and the fatherless rest on you and yours for ever. Amen, and amen!

“You will regret perhaps that I have taken up so much room respecting yourself, but I have scarcely gratified the shadow of my wishes. Excuse then on the one hand, that I have said so much, and accept on the other, what remains unexpressed.

“My affections and desires are among my dear people at Birmingham; and unless I find my strength increase here, I purpose to set out for that place in the course of a fortnight, or at most a month. The journey, performed by short stages may do me good: if not, I expect when the winter comes to sleep in peace: and it will delight my soul to see them once more before I die. Besides, I have many little arrangements to make among my books and papers, to prevent confusion after my decease. Indeed, till I get home, I cannot fully answer your kind letter; but I fear that my materials consist so much in references, which none but myself would understand, that a second person could not take it up, and prosecute it. I

am still equally indebted to you for a proposal so generous, so laborious.

“Rejoice with me that the blessed gospel still ‘bears my spirits up.’ I am become familiar with the thoughts of dying. I have taken my leave often with the world; and thanks be to God, I do it *always* with *tranquillity*, and *often* with *rapture*. Oh, what grace, what grace it was, that ever called me to be a christian! What would have been my present feelings, if I were going to meet my God with all the filth and load of my sin about me! But God in my nature hath put my sin away, taught me to love him, and long for his appearing. Oh, my dear brother, how constant is *everlasting praise* with such a great salvation!

S. P.”

After this, another letter was addressed to Mr. Pearce, informing him more particularly that the above proposal did not originate with an individual, but with several of the brethren who dearly loved him, and had consulted on the business; and that it was no more than an act of justice to one who had spent his life in serving the public; also requesting him to give directions by which his manuscripts might be found and examined, lest he should be taken away before his arrival at Birmingham. To this he answered as follows:—

Plymouth, July 6, 1799.

“I need not repeat the growing sense I have of your kindness, and yet I know not how to forbear.

“I cannot direct Mr. K—— to *all* my papers, as many of them are in books from which I was making extracts; and if I could, I am persuaded that they are in a state too confused, incorrect, and unfinished, to suffer you or any other friend to realize your kind intentions.

“I have possessed a tenacious memory. I have begun one part of the history; read the necessary books; reflected; arranged; written, perhaps, the introduction; and then, trusting to my recollection, with the revisal of the books as I should want them, have employed myself in getting materials for another part, &c. Thus, till my illness, the volumes existed in my head,—my books were at hand, and I was on the eve of writing them out, when it pleased God to make me pause: and, as close thinking has been strongly forbidden me, I dare say, that were I again restored to health, I should find it necessary to go over much of my former reading to refresh my memory.

“It is now Saturday. On Monday next we propose setting out on our return. May the Lord prosper our way! Accept the sincere affection, and the ten thousand thanks, of your brother in the Lord,
S. P.”

As the manuscripts were found to be in such a state, that no person, except the author himself, could finish them, the design was necessarily dropped. The public mind, however, was deeply impressed with Mr. Pearce's worth, and that, which the friendship of a few could not effect, has since been amply accomplished by the liberal exertions of many.

TO MR. BIRT.

Birmingham, July 26, 1799.

“It is not with common feelings that I begin a letter to *you*. Your name brings so many interesting circumstances of my life before me, in which your friendship has been so uniformly and eminently displayed, that now, amidst the imbecilities of sickness, and the serious prospect of another world, my heart is overwhelmed with gratitude, whilst it glows with affection,—an affection which eternity shall not annihilate, but improve.

“We reached Bristol on the Friday after we parted from you, having suited our progress to my strength and spirits. We staid with Bristol friends, till Monday, when we pursued our journey, and went comfortably on, till the uncommonly rough road from Tewkesbury to Evesham quite jaded me; and I have not yet recovered from the excessive fatigue of that miserable ride. At Alcester we rested a day and a half, and, through the

abundant goodness of God, we safely arrived at Birmingham on Friday evening, the 19th of July.

“ I feel an undisturbed tranquillity of soul, and am cheerfully waiting the will of God. My voice is gone, so that I cannot whisper without pain; and of this circumstance I am at times most ready to complain. For, to see my dear and amiable Sarah look at me, and then at the children, and at length bathe her face in tears, without my being able to say one word of comfort,—Oh!! Yet the Lord supports me under this also; and I trust will support me to the end. S. P.”

TO MR. ROCK.

July 28, 1799.

“ ——I am now to all appearance within a few steps of eternity. In Christ I am safe. In him I am happy. I trust we shall meet in heaven. S. P.”

TO R. BOWYER, ESQ.

Birmingham, August, 1, 1799.

“ Much disappointed that I am not released from this world of sin, and put in possession of the pleasures enjoyed by the spirits of just men made perfect, I once more address my dear fellow heirs of that glory which ere long shall be revealed to us all.

“ We returned from Devon last Friday

week. I was exceedingly weak, and for several days afterwards got rapidly worse. My friends compelled me to try another physician. I am still told that I shall recover. Be that as it may, I wish to have my own will annihilated, that the will of the Lord may be done. Through his abundant grace, I have been, and still am happy in my soul; and I trust my prevailing desire is, that living or dying I may be the Lord's. S. P."

TO MR. FULLER.

Birmingham, August 19, 1799.

"The doctor has been making me worse and weaker for three weeks. In the middle of the last week he spoke confidently of my recovery; but to day he has seen fit to alter his plans; and if I do not find a speedy alteration for the better, I must have done with all physicians, but him, who 'healeth the broken in heart.'

"For some time after I came home, I was led to believe my case to be consumptive, and then thinking myself of a certainty near the kingdom of heaven, I rejoiced hourly in the delightful prospect.

"Since then, I have been told that I am not in a dangerous way; and though I give very little credit to such assertions in this case, yet I have found my mind so taken up with earth again, that I seem as though I had

another soul. My spiritual pleasures are greatly interrupted, and some of the most plaintive parts of the most plaintive Psalms seem the only true language of my heart. Yet, 'Thy will be done,' I trust prevails; and if it be the Lord's will that I linger long, and suffer much, oh let him give me the patience of hope, and still his will be done.—I can write no more. This is a whole day's work: for it is only after tea that for a few minutes I can sit up, and attend to any thing. S. P."

From the latter end of August, and all through the month of September, to the tenth of October, *the day on which he died*, he seems to have been unable to write. He did not, however, lose the exercise of his mental powers; and though in the last of the above letters he complains of darkness, it appears that he soon recovered that peace and joy in God, by which his affliction, and even his life, were distinguished.

A little before he died, he was visited by Mr. Medley, of London, with whom he had been particularly intimate on his first coming to Birmingham. Mr. Pearce was much affected at the sight of his friend, and continued silently weeping for nearly ten minutes, holding and pressing his hand. After this he spoke, or rather, whispered as follows:—"This sick bed is a Bethel to me; it is none

other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven. I can scarcely express the pleasures that I have enjoyed in this affliction. The nearer I draw to my dissolution, the happier I am. It scarcely can be called an affliction, it is so counterbalanced with joy. You have lost your pious father; tell me how it was." Here Mr. Medley informed him of particulars. He wept much at the recital, and especially at hearing of his last words,—“Home, Home!” Mr. Medley telling him of some temptations he had lately met with, he charged him to keep near to God.—“Keep close to God,” said he, “and nothing will hurt you.”

One Lord’s-day morning he said to Mrs. Pearce, “Cheer up, my dear, think how much will be said to-day of the faithfulness of God. Though *we* are called to separate, *he* will never separate from you. I wish I could tell the world what a good and gracious God he is. Never need they, who trust in him, be afraid of trials. He has promised to give strength for the day; that is his promise. O what a lovely God! and he is *my* God and *yours*. He will never leave us, nor forsake us—no, never! I have been thinking that this and that medicine will do me good—but what have I to do with it? It is in my Jesus’ hands; he will do it all, and there I leave it. What a mercy is it, I have a good bed to lie upon;

you, my dear Sarah, to wait upon me; and friends to pray for me! O how thankful should I be for all my pains! I want for nothing: all my wishes are anticipated. O! I have felt the force of those words of David, ‘Unless thy law, (my gracious God!) had been my delight, I should have perished in mine affliction.’ Though I am too weak to read it, or hear it, I can think upon it, and O how good it is! I am in the best hands I could be in—in the hands of my dear Lord and Saviour, and he will do all things well. Yes, yes, he cannot do wrong.”

One morning Mrs. P. asked him how he felt? “Very ill, but unspeakably happy in the Lord and *my dear Lord Jesus*.” Once beholding her grieving, he said, “O my dear Sarah, do not be so anxious, but leave me entirely in the hands of Jesus, and think, if you were as wise as he, you would do the same by me. If he takes me, I shall not be lost, I shall only go a little before; we shall meet again, never to part.”

After a violent fit of coughing he said, “It is all well; O, what a good God is he! It is done by him, and it must be well.—If I ever recover, I shall pity the sick more than ever, and if I do not, I shall go to sing delivering love; so you see it will be all well.—O for more patience! Well, my God is the God of patience, and he will give me all I need. I

rejoice it is in my Jesus' hands to communicate, and it cannot be in better. It is my God who gives me patience to bear all his will."

When, after a restless night, Mrs. P. asked him, what she should do for him? "You can do nothing but pray for me, that I may have patience to bear all my Lord's will."—After taking a medicine he said, "If it be the Lord's will to bless it, for your sake, and for the sake of the dear children—but the Lord's will be done. O, I fear I sin, I dishonour God by impatience; but I would not for a thousand worlds sin in a thought if I could avoid it." Mrs. P. replied, she trusted the Lord would still keep him; seeing he had brought him thus far, he would not desert him at last. "No, no," he said, "I hope he will not. As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. Why do I complain? My dear Jesus' sufferings were much sorer and more bitter than mine. *And did he thus suffer, and shall I repine!* No, I will cheerfully suffer my Father's will."

One morning after being asked how he felt, he replied, "I have but one severe pain about me! What a mercy! O how good a God to afford some intervals amidst so much pain! He is altogether good. Jesus lives, my dear, and that must be our consolation."—After taking a medicine which operated very power-

fully, he said, "This will make me so much lower; well, let it be. Multiply my pains, thou good God, so thou art but glorified, I care not what I suffer; all is right."

Being asked how he felt after a restless night, he replied, "I have so much weakness and pain, I have not had much enjoyment; but I have a full persuasion that the Lord is doing all these well. If it were not for strong confidence in a lovely God, I must sink; but all is well. O blessed God, I would not love thee less; O support a sinking worm! O what a mercy to be assured that all things are working together for good."

Mrs. P. saying, If we must part, I trust the separation will not be for ever; "O no," he replied, "we sorrow not as those who have no hope." She said, Then you can leave me and your dear children with resignation, can you? He answered, "My heart was pierced through with many sorrows, before I could give you and the dear children up; but the Lord has heard me say, Thy will be done; and I now can say, blessed be his dear name, I have none of my own."

His last day, Oct. 10, was very happy; Mrs. P. repeated this verse,

Since all that I meet shall work for my good,
The bitter is sweet, the med'cine is food:
Though painful at present, 'twill cease before long,
And then, O how pleasant the conqueror's song.

He repeated with an inexpressible smile, the last line, "*The conqueror's song.*"

He said once, "O my dear! what shall I do? But why do I complain? He makes all my bed in my sickness." She then repeated those lines,

Jesus can make a dying bed
Feel soft as downy pillows are.

"Yes," he replied, "he can; he does; I feel it."

IN reviewing the character of Mr. Pearce, we can only, in concluding the memoir, remark upon a few, but prominent and interesting traits. He was affectionate to all, but especially towards the *rising generation*. The youth of his own congregation, of London, and of Dublin, have not forgotten his melting discourses which were particularly addressed to them. He took much delight in speaking to the children, and would adapt himself to their capacities, and expostulate with them on the things which belonged to their everlasting peace. While at Plymouth he wrote thus to one of his friends, "O how should I rejoice were there a speedy prospect of my returning to my great and *little* congregations." Nor was it by preaching only that he sought their eternal welfare: several of his letters are addressed to young persons.

With what joy did he congratulate one of his most intimate friends, on hearing that three of the younger branches of his family had apparently been brought to take the Redeemer's yoke upon them. "Thanks, thanks, thanks be to God," said he, "for the enrapturing prospects before you as a *father*, as a *Christian father* especially.—What, *three* of a family! and these three at once! O the heights, and the depths, and lengths, and breadths, of his unfathomable grace. My soul feels joy unspeakable at the blessed news. Three immortal souls secured for eternal life! Three rational spirits preparing to grace Immanuel's triumphs, and sing his praise! Three examples of virtue and goodness; exhibiting the genuine influences of the true religion of Jesus before the world—perhaps three mothers training up to lead three future families in the way to heaven. O what a train of blessings do I see in this event! Most sincerely do I participate with my dear friend, in his pleasures and in his gratitude."

Towards the close of life, writing to the same friend, he thus concludes his letter:—"Present our love to dear Mrs. S. and the family, especially those whose hearts are engaged to seek the Lord and his goodness. O tell them they will find him good all their lives, supremely good on dying beds, but best of all in glory."

In his visits to the sick he was singularly useful. His sympathetic conversation, affectionate prayers, and endearing manner of recommending to them a compassionate Saviour, frequently operated as a cordial to their troubled hearts. A young man of his congregation was dangerously ill. His father, living at a distance, was anxious to hear from him; and Mr. Pearce, in a letter to the minister on whose preaching the father attended, wrote as follows:—"I feel for the anxiety of Mr. V. and am happy in being at this time a Barnabas to him. I was not seriously alarmed for his son till last Tuesday, when I expected from every symptom, and the language of his apothecary, that he was nigh unto death. But to our astonishment and joy, a surprising change has since taken place. I saw him yesterday apparently in a fair way for recovery. His mind, for the first part of his illness, was sometimes joyful, and almost constantly calm; but when at the worst, suspicions crowded his mind; he feared he had been a hypocrite. I talked, and prayed, and wept with him. One scene was very affecting; both he and his wife appeared like persons newly awakened. They never felt *so strongly* the importance of religion before. He conversed about the tenderness of Jesus to broken-hearted sinners; and whilst we spoke, it seemed as though he came and began to heal

the wound. It did me good, and I trust not unavailing to them. They have since been for the most part happy; and a very pleasant interview I had with them on the past day."

Every man must have his seasons of relaxation. In his earlier years he would take strong bodily exercise. Of late, he occasionally employed himself with the microscope, and in making a few philosophical experiments. "We will amuse ourselves with philosophy," said he to a philosophical friend, "but Jesus shall be our teacher." In all these exercises he seems never to have lost sight of God; but would be discovering something in his works that should furnish matter for praise and admiration. His mind did not appear to have been unfitted, but rather assisted, by such pursuits for the discharge of the more spiritual exercises, into which he would fall at a proper season, as into his native element. If in company with friends, and the conversation turned upon the works of nature, or art, or any other subject of science, he would cheerfully take a part in it, and when occasion required, by some easy and pleasant transition, direct it into another channel.—An ingenious friend once showed him a model of a machine which he thought of constructing, and by which he hoped to be able to produce a perpetual motion. Mr. Pearce having patiently inspected it, discovered where the

operation would stop, and pointed it out. His friend was convinced, and felt, as may be supposed, rather unpleasant at his disappointment. He consoled him; and a prayer-meeting being at hand, said to this effect, "We may learn from hence our own insufficiency, and the glory of that Being, who is *wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working*: let us go and worship Him."

His ministry was highly acceptable to persons of education: but he appears to have been most in his element when preaching to the poor. The feelings which he himself expresses when instructing the colliers, appear to have continued with him through life. It was his delight to carry the glad tidings of salvation into the villages, wherever he could find access and opportunity. And as he sought the good of their souls, so he both laboured and suffered to relieve their temporal wants; living himself in a style of frugality and self-denial, that he might have whereof to give to them that needed.

Finally, *he possessed a large portion of real happiness*. There are few characters whose enjoyments, both natural and spiritual, have risen to so great a height. He dwelt in love: and *he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him*. Such a life must needs be happy.

If an object of joy presented itself to his

mind, he would delight in multiplying it by its probable or possible consequences. Thus it was, as we have seen, in his congratulating his friend on the conversion of three of his children; and thus it was when speaking of a people who divided into two congregations, not from discord, but from an increase of numbers; and who generously united in erecting a new and additional place of worship—"These liberal souls are subscribing," said he, "in order to support a religion, which, as far as it truly prevails, will render others as liberal as themselves."

His heart was so much formed for social enjoyment that he seems to have contemplated the heavenly state under this idea with peculiar advantage. On this pleasing subject he dwells also in a letter to his dear friend *Birt*.—"I had much pleasure a few days since, in meditating on the affectionate language of our Lord to his sorrowful disciples: *I go to prepare a place for you*. What a plenitude of consolation do these words contain; what a sweet view of heaven as a place of *society*. It is *one place* for us all: that place where his glorified body is, there all his followers shall assemble, to part no more. Where he is, there we shall be also. Oh blessed anticipation! There shall be Abel, and all the martyrs; Abraham, and all the patriarchs; Isaiah, and all the prophets; Paul,

and all the apostles; Gabriel, and all the angels; and above all, JESUS, and all his ransomed people! Oh to be amongst the number! My dear brother, let us be strong in the Lord. Let us realize the bliss before us. Let our faith bring heaven itself near, and feast, and live upon the scene. Oh what a commanding influence would it have upon our thoughts, passions, comforts, sorrows, words, ministry, prayers, praises, and conduct. What manner of persons should we be in all holy conversation and godliness!"

In many persons, the pleasures imparted by religion are counteracted by a gloomy constitution: but it was not so in him. In his disposition they met with a friendly soil. Cheerfulness was as natural to him as breathing; and this spirit, sanctified by the grace of God, gave a tincture to all his thoughts, conversation, and preaching. He was seldom heard without tears; but they were frequently tears of pleasure. No levity, no attempts at wit, no aiming to excite the risibility of an audience, ever disgraced his sermons. Religion in him was habitual seriousness, mingled with sacred pleasure, frequently rising into sublime delight, and occasionally overflowing with transporting joy.

CHAPTER V.

Letters to some of his Friends.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM STAUGHTON, D. D.
(*of Philadelphia.*)

“My dear Brother, *Birmingham, June 4, 1791.*

“I received yours just before I left Birmingham, on Wednesday last.—It did me good, and gave me pleasure. I rejoice in your joy—I thank God for the assistance he grants you in public work. Oh let all the strength and power you have be devoted as to the Divine Will may seem fit—let it all be employed to exalt the Saviour—aim at that, and that only, my dear brother, in all your sermons. It will give us more pleasure another day, that he was exalted by us, than that we exalted ourselves. Would to God we could live more on him personally—we should then speak with more pleasure of him publicly; it is pleasant speaking for God when we walk with him. May your experience and mine confirm it.

Your very affectionate brother, S. P.”

TO THE SAME.

Plymouth Dock, July 29, 1791.

“My dear Friend,

“One of the students, a Mr. Rowland, is now dangerously ill at Plymouth Dock, in a

fever which is very prevalent here, and he lodges in a house, where another student from the same country (Wales) died a few years since—Lord, what is man! Oh my brother, let us improve diligently the moments we possess, let us watch for souls, let us spend ourselves in its service for them. I preached thrice yesterday, not without pleasure; God grant it may be with profit. How is it with your soul—how do you find closet duties. I have had some precious seasons at a throne of grace since I reached Plymouth: I could say it was good, very good, to draw nigh to God. I am more and more convinced, that our private devotion, or indevotion, will materially affect the tenor of our deportment. God help us to give him our hearts—no fear then but he will have our services too. I wish you much of the divine presence; still pray for your unworthy brother, and still help him to praise.

I am yours affectionately, S. P.”

TO DR. RYLAND.

Birmingham, (Lord's-day evening,) Dec. 9, 1798.

My dear Brother,

AFTER a Sabbath (such an one I never knew before) spent in an entire seclusion from the house and ordinances of my God, I seek christian converse with you, in a way in

which I am yet permitted to have intercourse with my brethren. The day after I wrote to you last, my medical attendant laid me under the strictest injunctions not to speak again in public for one month at least. He says that my stomach has become so irritable, through repeated inflammations, that conversation, unless managed with great caution, would be dangerous; that he does not think my present condition alarming, provided I take rest—but without that, he intimated my life was in great danger. He forbids my exposing myself to the evening air, on any account, and going out of doors, or to the door, unless when the air is dry and clear; so that I am, during the weather we now have in Birmingham, (very foggy) a complete prisoner; and the repeated cautions from my dear and affectionate friends, whose solicitude, I conceive, far exceeds the danger, compel me to a rigid observance of the Doctor's rules.

This morning brother Pope took my place; and in the afternoon Mr. Brewer, who has discovered uncommon tenderness and respect for me and the people, since he knew my state, preached a very affectionate sermon from 1 Sam. iii. 18. "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." By what I hear, his sympathizing observation, in relation to the event which occasioned his being then in the pulpit, drew more tears from the people's

eyes, than a dozen such poor creatures as their pastor could deserve. But I have, blessed be God! long had the satisfaction of finding myself embosomed in friendship—the friendship of the people of my charge: though I lament that their love should occasion them a pang—but thus it is—our heavenly Father sees that, for our mixed characters, a mixed state is best.

I anticipated a day of gloom, but I had unexpected reason to rejoice that the shadow of death was turned into the joy of the morning; and though I said, with perhaps before unequalled feeling, “How amiable are thy tabernacles!” yet I found the God of Zion does not neglect the dwellings of Jacob. My poor wife was very much affected at so novel a thing as leaving me behind her, and so it was a dewy morning; but the Sun of Righteousness soon arose, and shed such ineffable delight throughout my soul, that I could say, ‘It is good to be *here*.’ Motive to resignation and gratitude also, crowded upon motive, till my judgment was convinced, that I ought to rejoice in the Lord exceedingly, and so my whole soul took its fill of joy. May I, if it be my Saviour’s will, feel as happy when I come to die! When my poor Sarah lay at the point of death, I enjoyed such support, and felt my will so entirely bowed down to that of God, that I said in my heart, “I shall never fear another trial

—he that sustained me amidst this flame, will defend me from every spark!” and this confidence I long enjoyed. But that was near six years ago, and I had almost forgotten the land of the Hermonites, and the hill Mizar. But the Lord has prepared me to receive a fresh display of his fatherly care, and his (shall I call it?) punctilious veracity. If I should be raised up again, I shall be able to preach on the faithfulness of God more experimentally than ever. Perhaps some trial is coming on, and I am to be instrumental in preparing them for it: or if not, if I am to depart hence to be no more seen, I know the Lord can carry on his work as well without me as with me. He who redeemed the sheep with his blood, will never suffer them to perish for want of shepherding, especially since he himself is the chief Shepherd of souls. But my *family*! Ah, *there* I find my faith but still imperfect. However, I do not think the Lord will ever take me away, till he helps me to leave my fatherless children in his hands, and trust my widow also with him. “His love in times past,” and I may add in times *present* too, “forbids me to think he will leave me at *last*, in trouble to sink.”

Whilst my weakness was gaining ground, I used to ask myself, how I could like to be laid by? I have dreamed that this was the case, and both awake and asleep, I felt as

though it were an evil that could not be borne:—but now, I find the Lord can fit the back to the burden, and though I think I love the thought of serving Christ at this moment better than ever, yet he has made me willing to be nothing, if he please to have it so; and now my happy heart “could sing itself away to everlasting bliss ”

O what a mercy that I have not brought on my affliction by serving the *devil*. What a mercy that I have so many dear sympathizing friends! What a mercy that I have so much dear domestic comfort! What a mercy that I am in no violent bodily pain! What a mercy that I can read and write, without doing myself an injury! What a mercy that my animal spirits have all the time this has been coming on, (ever since the last Kettering meeting of ministers) been vigorous—free from dejection! And which I reckon among the greatest of this day’s privileges, what a mercy that I have been able to employ myself for Christ and his dear cause to-day, as I have been almost wholly occupied in the concerns of the (I hope) *reviving* church at Bromsgrove; and the infant church at Cradly! O my dear brother, it is *all* mercy, is it not? O help me then in his praise, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever.

Ought I to apologize for this experimental chat with you, who have concerns to transact

of so much more importance, than any that are confined to an individual? Forgive me if I have intruded too much on your time—but do not forget to praise on my behalf a faithful God. I shall now leave room against I have some business to write about—till then, adieu—but let us not forget, that *this God, is our God for ever and ever*, and will be *our guide* even until death. Amen. Amen. We shall soon meet in heaven. S. P.

TO MR. POPE.

Plymouth, May 24, 1799.

I cannot write much—this I believe is the only letter that I have written (except to my wife) since I wrote to you last. My complaint has issued in a confirmed, slow, nervous fever, which has wasted my spirits and strength, and taken a great part of the little flesh I had when in health away from me. The symptoms have been very threatening, and I have repeatedly thought, that let the physician do what he will, he cannot keep me long from those heavenly joys, for which, blessed be God, I have lately been much longing; and were it not for my *dear people and family*, I should have earnestly prayed for leave to depart and be with Christ, which is so much better than to abide in this vain, suffering, sinning world.

The doctors, however, now pronounce my case very hopeful—say there is little or no danger—but that all these complaints require a *great deal of time* to get rid of. I still feel myself on precarious ground, but quite resigned to the will of *Him*, who, unworthy as I am, continues daily to “fill my soul with joy and peace in believing.” Yes, my dear friend! *now* my soul feels the value of a free, full, and everlasting salvation—and what is more, I do *enjoy* that salvation, while I rest all my hope on the SON of GOD in human nature, dying on the cross for me. To me now, health or sickness, pain or ease, life or death are things indifferent. I feel so happy in being in the hands of Infinite Love, that when the severest strokes are laid upon me, I receive them with pleasure, because they come from my heavenly Father’s hands! “O! to grace how great a debtor,” &c.

TO DR. RYLAND.

Birmingham, July 20, 1799.

My very dear Brother,

Your friendly anxieties on my behalf demand the earliest satisfaction. We had a pleasant ride to Newport on the afternoon we left you, and the next day without much fatigue reached Tewksbury; but the road was so rough from Tewksbury to Evesham, that

it wearied and injured me more than all the jolting we had had before put together. However, we reached Alcester on Wednesday evening, stopped there a day to rest, and last night (Friday) were brought safely hither, blessed be God!

I find myself getting weaker and weaker, and so my Lord instructs me in his pleasure to remove me soon. You say well, my dear brother, that at such a prospect, I “cannot *complain*.” No, blessed be His dear name, who shed his blood for me, he helps me to rejoice, at times, with joy unspeakable. Now I see the value of the religion of the cross. It is a religion for a dying sinner. It is all the most guilty, the most wretched can desire. Yes, I taste its sweetness, and enjoy its fullness, with all the gloom of a dying bed before me. And far rather would I be the poor emaciated, and emaciating creature that I am, than be an Emperor, with every earthly good about him . . . but without a God!

I was delighted the other day, in re-perusing the Pilgrim’s Progress, to observe that when Christian came to the top of the hill Difficulty, he was put to sleep in a chamber called Peace. Why, how good is the Lord of the way to me! said I; I have not reached the summit of the hill yet, but notwithstanding he puts me to sleep in the chamber of Peace *every night*. True, it is often a chamber of

pain; but let pain be as formidable as it may, it has never yet been able to expel that peace which the great Guardian of Israel has appointed to keep my heart and mind through Christ Jesus.

I have been labouring lately to exercise most love to God when I have been suffering most severely; but, what shall I say? Alas! too often the sense of pain absorbs every other thought. Yet there have been seasons when I have been affected with such a delightful sense of the loveliness of God as to ravish my soul, and give predominance to the sacred passion. It was never till to-day that I got any personal instruction from our Lord's telling Peter by *what death* he should glorify God. O what a satisfying thought is it, that God appoints those means of dissolution whereby he gets most glory to himself. It was the very thing I needed; for of all the ways of dying, that which I most dreaded was by a consumption; (in which it is now highly probable my disorder will issue.) But, O my dear Lord, *if by this death* I can most *glorify thee*, I prefer it to all others, and thank thee that by this mean thou art hastening my fuller enjoyment of thee in a purer world.

A *sinless* state! "O 'tis a heaven worth dying for!" I cannot realize any thing about heaven, but the presence of Christ and his

people, and a perfect deliverance from sin, and I want no more—I am sick of sinning—soon I shall be beyond its power. “O joyful hour! O blessed abode! I shall be near and *like* my God!” I only thought of filling one side—and now have not left room to thank you and dear Mrs. Ryland for the minute, affectionate, and constant attentions you paid us in Bristol. May the Lord reward you. Our hearty love to all around, till we meet in heaven.

Eternally yours in Christ, S. P.

TO DR. RYLAND.

Birmingham, (Lord's-day Evening,) Aug. 4, 1799.

My very dear brother,

Still, I trust, hastening to the land “where there shall be no more curse,” I take this opportunity of talking a little with you on the road, for we are fellow-travellers, and a little conversation by the way will not lose me the privilege of getting first to the end of my journey.

It is seventeen years within about a week since I first actually set out on my pilgrimage; and when I review the many dangers to which, during that time, I have been exposed, I am filled with conviction that I have all along been the care of Omnipotent Love. Ah how many Pliables, and Timorouses, and Talka-

tives have I seen, while my quivering heart said, “Alas! I shall soon follow these sons of apostasy, prove a disgrace to religion, and have my portion with hypocrites at last.”

These fears may have had their uses—may have made me more cautious, more distrustful of myself, and kept me more dependent on the Lord. Thus

“All that I’ve met has work’d for my good.”

With what intricacy, to our view, and yet with what actual skill and goodness, does the Lord draw his plans, and mark out our path! Here we wonder and complain—Soon we shall all agree that it was a right path to the city of habitation; and what we now most deeply regret, shall become the subject of our warmest praises.

I am afraid to come back again to life. O how many dangers await me! Perhaps I may be overcome of some fleshy lust—perhaps I may get proud and indolent, and be more of the priest than of the evangelist—surely I rejoice in feeling my outward man decay, and having the sentence of death in myself. O what prospects are before me in the blessed world whither I am going! To be *holy as God is holy*—to have nothing but holiness in my nature—to be assured, without a doubt, and eternally to carry about this assurance with me, that the pure God looks on me with con-

stant complacency, for ever blesses me, and says, as at the first creation, "It is very good." I am happy now in hoping in the divine purposes towards me; but I know, and the thought is my constant burden, that the Being I love best, always sees something in me which he *infinitely hates*. "O wretched, wretched man that I am!" The thought even now makes me weep, and who can help it, that seriously reflects, he never comes to God to pray or praise, but he brings what his God detests along with him—carries it with him wherever he goes, and can never get rid of it as long as he lives? Come, my dear brother! will you not share my joy, and help my praise, that soon I shall leave this body of sin and death behind, to enter on the perfection of my spiritual nature; and patiently to wait till this natural body shall become a spiritual body, and so be a fit vehicle for my immortal and happy spirit?

But I must forbear—I have been very unwell all day; but this evening God has kindly given me a respite—my fever is low and my spirits are cheerful, so I have indulged myself in unbosoming my feelings to my dear friend.

S. P.

MEMOIR
OF
MRS. PEARCE,

WIDOW OF THE LATE MR. PEARCE, OF BIRMINGHAM,
WHO DIED MAY 25, 1804.

To which are added,

Extracts from a few of her Letters, written since the
Death of her Husband.



A SENSATION so strong as that which was felt by the religious public on the death of Mr. Pearce, must needs be followed with a desire to know a few particulars of the partner of his cares. The reader will perceive in her a strain of genuine piety, and christian affection: and though when reading her lamentations he may think she discovered too much of an irreconcilable spirit, yet, considering the loss she had sustained, he will rather be disposed to pity, than severely to censure her, especially as they imply so just an appreciation of departed worth.

After the death of her husband, she constantly assembled her little family, morning and evening, to commit them to the care of

Heaven, fervently praying for their conversion, and that they might walk in the steps of their honoured father.

She would sometimes complain of darkness of mind, and the want of satisfactory evidence of the reality of her own religion; but in general her hope was steady and lively.

She was a pattern of early and regular attendance at the house of God at all seasons. Though she lived about a mile from it, yet no weather, nor little indispositions of body, would prevent her attendance. She loved the habitation of his house, and the place where his honour dwelt. She esteemed those most who appeared to bear most of the image of Christ. It was on this account, as well as from natural affection, that she felt so severely the loss of her dear companion, who was to her not only a husband, but a friend, an instructor, and a guide.

As her last illness was of such a nature as to render her incapable of conversation, no particular account can be given of the state of her mind at the close of life. The reader will obtain a taste of her spirit from a few extracts of letters furnished by the kindness of her correspondents. We shall give them in the order of time in which they appear to have been written, which may serve in some measure to show the progress of her exercises under the severest of temporal bereavements.

TO MRS. H.

Eleven weeks after Mr. Pearce's death.

December 25, 1799.

——“In vain, alas, in vain I seek him whose presence gave a zest to every enjoyment! I wander about the house as one bereft of her better half. I go into the study—I say to myself, There is the chair he occupied, there are the books he read; but where, oh where is the *owner*? I come into the parlour—there my tenderest feelings are awakened by four fatherless children.* The loss of him with whom I have been accustomed to go up to the house of God diminishes, ah, I may say too frequently *deprives* me of my enjoyment while there.

TO MRS. F.

On the death of her youngest child, Samuel.

July 11, 1800.

——“After an illness of a few days, it hath pleased the great Arbiter of life and death to bereave me of my dear little boy, aged one year and six months; and thus again to convince me of the uncertainty of all earthly joys,

* Mrs. Pearce was left with *five* children : but her eldest son, William, was at this time from home, being taken soon after his father's death, out of pure friendship, by Mr. William Nichols of Nottingham, with whom he long continued.

and bring to remembrance my past sorrows. He was in my fond eyes one of the fairest flowers human nature ever exhibited; but ah, he is dropt at an early period! Yet the hope of his being transplanted into a more salutary clime, there to re-bloom in everlasting vigour; and the reflection, that if he had lived, he had unavoidably been exposed to innumerable temptations, from which, if my life was spared, I should yet be unable to screen him, make me still. Though I feel as a parent, and I hope as a christian, yet I can resign him. Oh, could I feel but half the resignation respecting the loss of my beloved Pearce! But I cannot. Still bleeds the deep, deep wound; and a return to Birmingham* is a return to the most poignant feelings. I *wish* however to resign him to the hand that gave, and that had an unquestionable right to take away. Be still then every tumultuous passion, and know that he who hath inflicted these repeated strokes, is God: that God whom I desire to reverence under every painful dispensation, being persuaded that what I know not now, I shall know hereafter.”

TO THE SAME.

December, 1800.

“My dear children gone to bed, a clean hearth, a cheerful fire, but a dejected mind—

* This letter was written from Alcester.

what will have a greater tendency to dissipate that dejection than to converse awhile with my dear friend Mrs. F.? Yet she must prepare herself for Ezekiel's roll. You will not wonder at this when I tell you, that within the last half hour I have been comparing my present evenings with those two years ago, when my beloved Pearce and myself were accustomed to sit together, and talk over the events of the past day, and look forward to the probable ones of the next; and when he would give the gentle caution where necessary, and direct me when in difficulty. But now, alas, a sad reverse succeeds! A solitary fireplace, a necessity of acting alone; and whatever difficulties arise, there is no one to direct me. But God is just; and let me not repine, though I must needs *feel* the change.

“Why sinks my weak desponding mind?
Why heaves my heart the anxious sigh?
Can sovereign goodness be unkind?
Am I not safe if God be nigh?”

“O yes, if he be nigh, I want no more! This storm, though violent, will be but short: a few more blasts, a few more sighs, and I trust to arrive where sighing, sinning, and parting from those we love, shall be done away. Oh glorious anticipation! 'Tis this, 'tis this supports thy friend while steering the tempestuous ocean of widowhood.

“I was glad to hear your dear babe was

nearly recovered. May you long enjoy it, and may it be an increasing comfort to you. But do not do as I did, love it too well to part with it with cheerfulness when God calls. Oh, that dear loved name *Samuel*—how many pangs has it since cost me! There is no SAMUEL PEARCE now! But why do I thus complain? Oh, my rebellious passions! Often do I exclaim,

“Ye that love the Lord indeed,
Tell me, is it thus with you?”

“Since I saw you, my heart has been rent with such passions as are indescribable, and which I shudder to reflect upon. But let me speak it with unfeigned gratitude. I have felt for this last week, a degree of resignation, to which, ever since I lost my beloved Pearce, I was a stranger. From comparing my own insignificance with the greatness of the hand that has visited me, and who though he smote me (as I fear) in wrath, yet hath remembered mercy, my spirit has bowed to his sovereign will. I have also felt that it is of the Lord’s mercies, I am not consumed. I had said, by my thoughts and actions, ‘Let all go: there is nothing worth keeping!’ Why then was I not deprived of every comfort, seeing I made so light of what was left? To what a state should I have been reduced, had the Lord taken me at my word! But oh, cheering thought! He

is a God full of compassion, who does not afflict willingly; and I believe I shall see in the end that all that hath befallen me is for my profit."

TO MRS. H.

March 17, 1801.

———"Oh, my friend, my wayward heart still cleaves to earth; and though so often disappointed in looking for comfort in the creature, when my better reason tells me it can only be found in the great Creator, yet still I must be trying again. In the midst of my most sorrowful reflections, I am aware that my mercies preponderate; and claim not only resignation, but gratitude. I cannot be enough thankful for the goodness which mixes with judgment; and at times the language of my heart is, Bless the Lord, oh my soul, and forget not *any* of his benefits! Oh, could I leave my *all* with him, without an anxious care! How much more happy should I be."

TO MRS. F.

On the illness of her daughter, Louisa.

April 28, 1801.

———"My dear Louisa is so ill, that I have many fears on her account. Oh, my dear friend, a prospect the most distant of another

bereavement involves my mind in gloom. Pray for me that my heart may be fortified for the worst. She has been to me an interesting child; and my fond heart has been pleasing itself that in a few years I should in her find a companion. Are you not astonished, that after so many disappointments, I should still be cleaving to the creature? Yet so it is: no sooner am I deprived of one comfort, but I grow insensibly to another, till disappointed again of this, I am compelled to feel the vanity of all below. I want to have my will entirely absorbed in the will of my heavenly Father; and at times it is my most earnest prayer, that he would not remove his chastising hand till the end is accomplished for which it is laid upon me; only that he would give me strength to endure his will. But surely I must be an untoward child to need such repeated and severe discipline. Pray for me."

TO MRS. H.

September 19, 1801.

———"It is an unspeakable mercy that I am in the hands of so kind and good a God, who knoweth our frame, and remembereth that we are but dust. As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. How light and trifling do all our trials appear when compared with the important end they are de-

signed to answer. What are the sufferings of the present time, compared with the glory that is to be revealed in us? May we be made willing to do and suffer the whole of God's will, in order to our meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light! O that my heart were more in heaven, where I trust my treasure is! At times I can say, Do with me, Lord, as seemeth thee good; only sanctify thy dealings with me, and bring me forth as gold refined from all remaining dross."

TO MRS. F.

October 12, 1801.

———"No doubt you have joined the general joy occasioned by the sound of *peace*. Never did I experience such sensations as on last Saturday, and Sabbath-day. You may perhaps recollect that Saturday, October 10, is an ever memorable day to me! I do not know that ever I spent a day more devoted to sadness. My situation is retired—no friend came near me—every painful feeling was again recalled—I indulged it; my whole heart took its fill of grief! You may suppose I was ill prepared for attending the service of the sanctuary next day; and for awhile I felt a desire of staying at home, but did not think it right to indulge it. At length I summoned resolution, and went. While on the road,

peace! peace! was sounded in my ears: every eye beamed gladness: but my poor harp was hung upon the willows. Oh how I wished to hide myself in a corner, where no eye could see me. I was, however, considerably relieved in the morning, from a sermon by Mr. Giles of Dartmouth, on, ‘Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.’ My burden was in some measure removed.”

TO MRS. H.

October 18, 1801.

——“I have been endeavouring to-day to forget what period of the year it is; but alas, too faithful memory, ever ready to recal the hour which put an end to my earthly happiness, pursues me! When shall I feel my will absorbed in the will of God, and have none but his? I want to live above this fading, dying world, and wonder I should be so attached to it when it has so frequently disappointed me. Oh how I envy those who have learnt that useful lesson, deadness to the creature, and life in God.”

TO MRS. F. (*without date.*)

——“A firm persuasion that God directs all our concerns, ought to silence every mur-

mur, and check every degree of impatience in our minds respecting them; and yet how difficult it is to restrain our spirits and subdue them to the influence of religion. I have indeed found it so, and at times still feel it; though I desire to be thankful I have been more tranquil the last six weeks, and enabled to yield myself more entirely to the divine disposal. A reflection on the large portion of happiness I *have* enjoyed, and a review of the goodness of God to me under my trials, have contributed to quiet my mind, and excited a degree of gratitude and confidence in the hope of his continued aid. Though I can never cease to regret the loss I have sustained; yet I wish not to indulge in these regrets. Time, and reverence for the divine character, (who cannot err) does that for us which no human power can effect. May we be enabled to sit at the feet of Jesus, and learn our duty and privilege to trust in him at all times, and make him our only refuge."

ANOTHER TO THE SAME, (*without date.*)

———"I do sincerely rejoice with you that the sun of prosperity, in the best sense, so vividly gilds your path. It is *this* that gives a zest to all our enjoyments, cheers the deepest gloom, and makes light the heaviest burdens.—I know you will be happy to hear that

for some time past my mind has been more uniformly composed. Not that I experience what I have so ardently thirsted after, *cheerful resignation*: but I trust I do feel more satisfied with the government of God, more convinced that what he does is best; that if I had had the management of my own concerns, they would not have been ordered half so well, and that there was a “needs be” for every pain I have felt, and every deprivation I have sustained. I feel *in some degree* with the pious Mrs. Rowe, when she said, ‘If thou wouldst permit me to choose for myself, I would resign the choice again to Thee.’ I dread nothing more than the guidance of my own blind desires. I tremble at the thought of such a fatal liberty. Avert, gracious God, that miserable freedom! Thou foreseest all events, and at one single view dost look through eternal consequences: therefore do thou determine my circumstances, not to gratify my own blind desires, but to advance thy glory.’—Such I say, in some degree, are my desires. But oh, pray for me, that I may be upheld of God,

‘Else the next cloud that veils my skies
Drives all these thoughts away.’

TO THE SAME, (*without date.*)

——“I am just returned from hearing two more of our friends declare before the church,

what God hath done for their souls; and my dear Pearce was the instrument of bringing them out of darkness into marvellous light. Rejoice with me that the seed so long sown springs up. Gratitude excites a desire to praise my God, the gracious Giver of every mercy.

“Oh, my friend, how rich, how inestimable is the gift of Jesus Christ! All that eye hath seen, or the most lively imagination conceived of, is nothing to the extent of the divine goodness. Never shall we form any adequate conception of it till we know as we are known. To be near and like God, must surely be the summit of expected felicity. Oh delightful thought! It will never decay. May a lively and increasing hope in these exalted realities, enable us to bear every trial with patience and fortitude. He who is a rock, and whose work is perfect, will accomplish whatever concerns those who put their trust in him.—I could not withhold news which has caused such a gleam of joy as I have not experienced for a long time, from my dear friend, who has taken so large a share of my gloom.—Farewell.”

Early in the month of May, 1804, Mrs. Pearce was considered by her friends as unwell; for eight or nine days, however, no ap-

prehensions of danger seem to have been entertained either on their part or her own. But about the 20th, the fever increased to such a degree, as to bring on a delirium, which continued till the 25th, when she breathed her last.

THE END.

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